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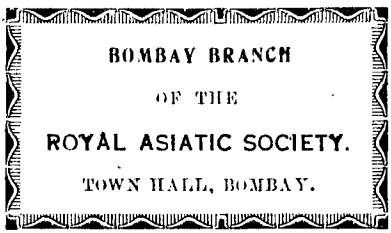

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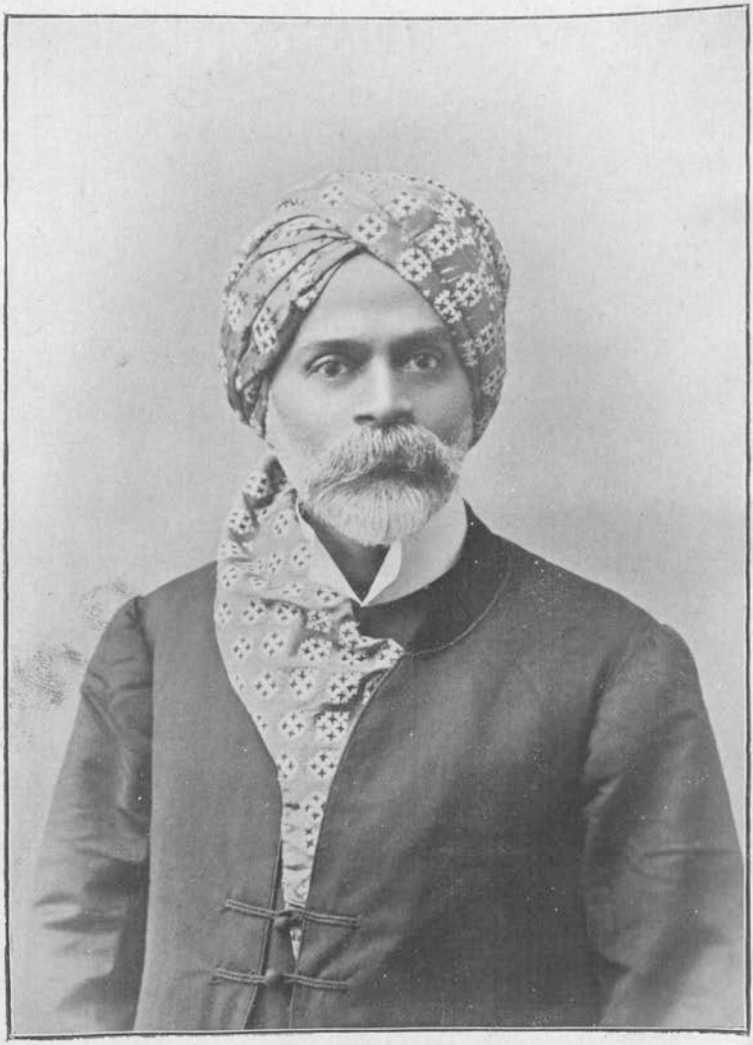

S. M. MITRA.

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HINDUPORE

A PEEP BEHIND THE INDIAN UNREST

AN ANGLO-INDIAN ROMANCE

90293

BY

S. M. MITRA

AUTHOR OF "INDIAN PROBLEMS," ETC.

"A friend's eye is a good looking-glass"

Kx. M. 540.

LONDON
LUZAC AND CO.
46, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.
1909

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PREFACE

My articles on the Indian Unrest in the *Nineteenth Century* were well received, and I was asked to deal with the subject in a more popular form. That is the genesis of "Hindupore." But for the encouraging letter to me from that distinguished Indian expert, Sir George Birdwood, M.D., K.C.I.E., C.S.I., LL.D., an extract from which, with his permission, I publish below, I should not have felt justified in placing "Hindupore" before the British public.

S. M. MITRA.

The Royal Asiatic Society,
22, Albemarle Street,
London, W.
November 30, 1909.

Extract from Sir George Birdwood's Letter.

"Hindupore" reveals many of the deepmost things of India hidden from Englishmen, even those who may have passed away half their lives

in that country—a country in which historical (pagan Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Babylonia, Greece, and Rome) as distinguished from prehistorical antiquity still survives. The chapters on "Pan-Hinduism," "Irish Signs and Hindu Signs," and "Hindu-Japanese Affinity," are instructive and most suggestive; and, apart from the attractions "Hindupore" may have for the readers of romances, it has a political value in this momentary crisis in the affairs of India; for only the imbecilities inherent in our system of Government by party are artificially protracting a situation that to the ignorant alone seems so sinistrous.

HINDUPORE

CHAPTER I

CHATEAUBRIAND'S "ATALA" CAPTIVATES LORD TARA

It was early in April, and the weather was mild and calm, when the favourite P. and O. steamer *Nur-Jehan* entered the bright blue waters of the "tideless sea" on her voyage to the East.

At Marseilles several English passengers came on board, among them being Lord Tara, a young Irish Member of Parliament, full of ardour and enlightened zeal for the true welfare of the vast Indian Empire, which he was about to visit for the first time.

After dinner the captain proposed a moonlight concert and promenade on the upper deck. On his way up Lord Tara was met by a tall, handsome girl, who exclaimed as she held out her hand in greeting:

"So *you*, too, Lord Tara, are on board. I wonder what you are up to? I thought you

were too devoted to your duties to desert the House during the Session."

"To tell you the truth, Mrs. Ochterlony, I find I can't do much good there in the present state of affairs, so I am on my way to pay a long-promised visit to my old friend Herbert Harvey, who knows more than most men about the real state of the country. You know, he is devoted to India, as his father was before him. If all our civil servants were like them, I expect we should not hear so much as we do of unrest in India. But may I ask why you are going out there just in time for the hot season?"

"Can't you guess? We are going out for tiger-shooting. The Laird has been in India before, but I hope to prove myself a better shot even than he is, so I made him promise to give me a chance of my first tiger as soon as we were married. As you may remember, I brought down a splendid stag last September at Kildrum."

Tara did indeed remember how Mrs. Ochterlony, then Mabel Robson, had gloried in her cruel sport, not showing the least sign of compassion—as he thought a woman should—for the agony in the pathetic dying glance of her noble victim. He had never admired her since.

At that moment the Laird of Ochterlony joined his wife, handing her a gold cigarette-case she had sent him to fetch. He shook hands heartily with Tara, saying:

"I hope you, too, are coming out for some

tiger-shooting. If so, you had better join us. I've had good sport in India before, but it's very expensive—one has to pay so many natives for standing about doing nothing—and then, it's so confoundedly hot!" The Laird, though young, was a heavy man.

"I dare say you'll be shocked to see me light a cigarette, Lord Tara, but the Laird doesn't like to smoke alone," said Mabel. "I'm only glad Lady Claremont isn't here to see me; how dreadfully shocked she would be! You are the only man I know who doesn't smoke, and I know how much your mother dislikes it. But here comes your protégée, the fair lady doctor, Celitia Scott. I think you have met her before?"

"Our old friend and doctor, Dr. Granville Bain, introduced me to her a little while ago, to ask me to use some influence we had in getting her a Zenana appointment in India, and it ended in her being nominated to superintend the hospital at Cuttack, where she will attend the women pilgrims on their way to the Temple of Jagannath," replied Tara.

"It seems awful to me. I suppose she is fired by missionary zeal to convert the poor, ignorant creatures."

"Not at all. She admires their devotion to what they think right, and is ready to be of service to them in case of sickness or accident."

"I can't understand how a Christian woman can undertake such work."

"I dare say you can't," replied Tara quietly, as he went forward to meet Celitia.

"I did not know you were coming out before the end of the month," said Tara. "I believe the great Festival does not take place until the end of June or beginning of July."

"I am to take up my appointment, which I owe to your great kindness, Lord Tara, at the beginning of June; but Mrs. Ochterlony was kind enough to ask me to come out with her some weeks earlier, and spend a month or so in India before I settled down to my work, so of course I was only too glad to accept the offer."

"It happens that her uncle, Dr. Robert Scott, of Edinburgh, was our favourite doctor when we were children," said Mrs. Ochterlony. "He used to say, however, that we were not worth much to him, we were so seldom ill. My four brothers and I ran quite wild in our early years, always riding or hunting or fishing when we ought to have been at our lessons. Our home was on the Clyde, but my father owned about fifty square miles of forest land in the Western Highlands, too—but you have been to Kildrum, Lord Tara."

Mrs. Ochterlony might have added that Mr. Robson also owned one of the largest whisky distilleries in Scotland, but she did not.

"I spent a very happy time there last year," said Tara. "You have not told me yet where

you are going to stay in India. Everyone will be at Simla by the time we get out. I rather wished to avoid meeting too many of our own people—one sees so much of them at home. Harvey is detained at Barrackpore just now while his chief is away."

"We have promised to stay for a time with the Grevilles at Allahabad. Colonel Greville is stationed there with the Golconda Hussars. But how is it we did not meet on the journey to Marseilles?"

"I did not take the express," replied Tara. "I started in time to spend a day or two in Paris on the way."

"I think it is getting too chilly to sit out longer in the moonlight," said Mrs. Ochterlony, as she rose to go away.

"It is a lovely night," said Tara to Celitia. "Would you like to walk about a little while the band is still playing?" Celitia thanked him with the gracious manner that so well became her fine figure and commanding appearance. She was about thirty, with a curious power of attraction in her large grey eyes and expressive mouth, seeming to appeal instinctively to the admiration of every man she approached, as if fully conscious of her own position as a clever and cultured woman of the world.

When she was studying medicine all the doctors hovered about her, and, although statistics formed no part of the medical curriculum,

Dr. Granville Bain, the learned lecturer on pathology, often dwelt with statistical accuracy —in his private diary—on the number of times he had the good luck of enjoying Celitia's delightful society. She had taken her degree of M.D. with credit, and exerted her great persuasive powers to induce her friend and admirer Dr. Bain to use his influence on her behalf, with signal success.

The following morning Celitia was early on deck, taking a sketch of a passing fishing-smack, touched with the glowing hues of the newly-risen sun, that had caught her fancy, when Lord Tara came up to her.

"Good-morning, Miss Scott. I did not expect to find you about so early, but I see you have an object in view. How beautifully firm your outline is!"

"My drawing is of the practical kind that one studies as a help to the details of anatomy, and of course it's of no value unless quite accurate. I delight in colour effects. I never saw so glorious a sunrise as this—life in the West is so sombre."

"It is strange how one may sometimes be haunted by a picture," said Tara thoughtfully. "My ideal of beauty in a girl came to me from a lovely picture in the Louvre—Chateaubriand's 'Atala'—which I first saw when I was a boy of about twelve. My sister and I were in Paris at the time learning French, in charge of an ex-

tremely *comme il faut* French governess. Mademoiselle could not be persuaded to tell me the story of 'Atala,' as she said I was much too young to hear it, but I read it later. The exquisitely delicate and graceful figure and dark, refined features of the hapless Indian maiden made an impression upon my mind that has never left it. Every time I see the picture the feeling is confirmed."

Celitia was rather startled by this unexpected confidence. Perhaps Lord Tara had some romantic hope of finding his ideal in the East. She gave him a curious glance of her large intelligent grey eyes, and replied quietly:

"Sometimes we do have a mysterious kind of sympathy with a great work of art—there is something almost supernatural in the original conception of an imaginary being endowed with soul and spirit like our own."

"It was the spiritual beauty of this face that was its attraction. No one could see it and doubt the absolute purity and nobility of nature of the youthful virgin martyr. But to descend from the clouds, to everyday life, I wonder if you would gratify my curiosity to know why you have set your heart upon going to India?"

"It has been the dream of my life," said Celitia. "My father was in a Highland regiment, and as a very young man was present at the Siege of Lucknow. He afterwards exchanged into another regiment in order to remain longer

in India, and just before his retirement he met my mother in a remote part of the hill-country. She was then a beautiful girl of about seventeen, and, although unmistakably English in appearance, had been adopted and brought up with the utmost kindness in the family of a Hindu gentleman. He told my father that she was found—a pretty little girl of about three years old—by a Brahman priest in a deserted house at Cawnpore, just after the fatal massacre there, and conveyed in safety to the care of a friend in a distant province."

"No wonder you wish to see India; but pray finish your story."

"She came home with my father to Scotland soon after their marriage, but the climate tried her very much after the luxurious life she had led in India, and she died when I was seven years old. My father died about three years later, leaving me, his only child—almost unprovided for—to the care of his brother, a doctor of some standing in Edinburgh. Although he had a large family of his own, my uncle was like a father to me, and, as I had fairly good abilities, I succeeded in taking the degree of M.D. with honours, with the view of trying to obtain a Zenana appointment in India."

"But how did you discover that there was an opening for a lady doctor to the pilgrims at Jagannath—Juggernaut, as the missionary magazines call it—of all places in the world?" said

Tara, with an amused twinkle in his keen blue eyes.

"My mother had often told me, as a little child, of the sacred pilgrimages to Orissa, the Holy Land of the Hindu people, among whom she had lived so happily, and of the blessings that attend all who serve at the great Temple of Jagannath, the Lord of the World! I used to cry at the sad story she told me of the sufferings of the thousands of poor women who make the pilgrimage on foot every year. Quite lately I happened to meet an old Indian friend of my mother's, who told me that he had admired her so much as a girl that he would have married her, notwithstanding the difficulty of overcoming caste prejudices, if she had cared for him. When he found out what my ideas were, he said it would be a noble work for me to do what I could for these poor women, whose religious zeal leads them to overtax their strength by long and weary marches at the hottest season of the Indian year. It seems that more than five-sixths of the pilgrims are actually women! You see how much more depth of religious emotion we have than men. Even in church how few men are seen!" Celitia paused, and then added: "Where a lady doctor is so much needed, I naturally felt a great desire to be the one chosen."

"It is quite a strange coincidence," said Lord Tara, "that I, too, should have heard so much of the undying hold that the faith in the mighty

Jagannath has upon hundreds of millions of the Hindu race. My grandfather was formerly Viceroy of India, and felt the deepest respect for a religion, that could thus command the reverence of all the people of that vast Hindu Empire during thousands of years, and which in some vital points bears a striking resemblance in its sacred rites and beliefs to our own form of religion. My earliest recollections are of the thrilling stories my grandfather used to tell me, in his old age, of the miracles attributed to the great Vishnu—Jagannath—during the invasions of the Musalmans, who only succeeded in conquering and despoiling a comparatively small region of India in the end. My father, however, does not share my enthusiasm about India. His tastes are entirely those of a country gentleman, while the charm and glamour of the East have always had the strongest fascination for me."

"I suppose mental tastes sometimes recur, like inherited diseases, not in the first, but in the second generation," remarked Celitia.

"That is a very professional idea of yours, but I dare say you are right," replied Tara, laughing. "Anyhow, I am lucky in being allowed to please myself. My mother has quite settled down at Tara now, as she has never cared for London life since she lost her only daughter, about two years ago. That is why I have no home in town during the Parliamentary season. You see, I am telling you all about myself, as if we were old

friends. Don't you think there are some people who seem to attract one's confidence at once?"

"I am sure there are," said Celitia eagerly. "I wish you would tell me more about yourself. What are you going to do in India?"

"I had an invitation for big-game shooting in British East Africa from some Irish friends who have settled out there, but I thought I should prefer tiger-shooting in India, a civilized old country much better worth knowing. The tiger season happens to be the hottest time of the year in India, which is unfortunate. I don't get much hunting now, which I enjoy more than anything. I have hunted with my father since I was seven years old. There is the first breakfast-bell, I think; I'm rather glad to hear it. May I help you to put away your easel, Miss Scott? I'm afraid I have spoilt your clever sketch."

CHAPTER II

RAJA RAM SINGH JOINS AT SUEZ

As the *Nur-Jehan* approached nearer to the burning, sandy shores of the African coast the atmosphere became charged with the scorching dust-clouds raised by the gusts of wind blowing off the land. At Suez the only passenger to come on board was an Indian gentleman of remarkably distinguished appearance, dressed in a light English travelling suit, and attended by a Hindu servant with the greatest deference.

Tara, delighted to have the opportunity of making his acquaintance, soon found an excuse for entering into conversation with him.

The new-comer—Mr. Ram Singh—proved a great acquisition to the passengers, especially as he spoke English perfectly and bore the inevitable *désagréments* of the Suez Canal with true Oriental fortitude.

He was much interested in Celitia's mission, and passed hours with her and Lord Tara under the awning of the upper deck, talking over their plans and his own.

"I am now returning from a short visit to Italy; I wanted to see Rome. I have not been in England since the Diamond Jubilee of the 'Maha Rani.'"

Celitia looked up inquiringly, and said aside to Tara: "He must be some one of consequence."

Ram Singh continued: "I was fortunate enough to have an interview with the Pope. It was obtained through a learned Italian Jesuit whom I met in Calcutta. His Holiness seemed much interested in the Roman tradition—I don't know whether he had heard it before—that St. Thomas the Apostle preached Christianity in Southern India, on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, founded several churches, and, finally, was martyred at the Little Mount, Madras, in 68 A.D. The Buddhist polity, then supreme in Southern India, was favourable to the reception of a faith whose moral characteristics were humanity and self-sacrifice. Perhaps earlier Jewish settlers had familiarized the Indian mind with the existence of an ancient and imposing religion in Palestine. When that religion was presented in the new and more attractive form of Christianity, no miraculous intervention was required to commend it to the tolerant Buddhist Princes of Southern India."

"I never heard this before!" said Tara.

"I am true to my older faith," said Ram Singh, "yet the Christian ideal is one that must appeal to all religious minds. It is a pity that the

reality falls so far short of it as a rule. You look pale and tired, Miss Scott. I hope you know how to take care of yourself as well as your patients."

"I am only feeling the heat; one cannot get away from it on board ship," said Celitia.

"You must not work too hard in our climate. We do not allow our ladies to exert themselves much, though they are more energetic than they used to be in the olden days."

Celitia looked gratefully up to Ram Singh. How kind and considerate he was, and how very handsome! Then she said:

"I wonder if you could tell me anything about medical science in India?"

"I have been told that the ancient Hindus ranked their medical knowledge as an *Upa Veda*, or supplementary revelation, under the title of *Ayur Veda*, and ascribed it to the gods, as we do all things on earth. A chapter on the human body in the earliest Sanskrit dictionary, about 500 A.D., presupposes a systematic cultivation of the science," said Ram Singh.

"We are generally told that medical science came to us from Arabic sources!" remarked Celitia.

"The Hindu medical works contain no names that denote a foreign origin, and the chief seat of the science was at Benares. European medicine down to the seventeenth century was practically based upon the Hindu, and the name of the

Hindu physician Charaka repeatedly occurs in the Latin translations," said Ram Singh.

"This is quite a revelation to me," said Celitia. "But were there good surgeons too in those early days?"

"They seem to have performed the most difficult operations. A very curious branch of surgery mentioned in the old Hindu medical books was that of improving deformed ears and noses and forming new ones," said Ram Singh.

"Why, that is one of the latest scientific additions to surgery in the great London hospitals—one of the newest of innovations," said Celitia.

"You see, there is nothing new under the sun, the Indian sun especially," said Tara. "But this is really interesting. I suppose there were some medical schools too?"

"There were public hospitals and medical students about two thousand years ago in all the great centres of Buddhist civilization, like the monastic University of Nalanda, near Gaya," said Ram Singh. "Hippocrates was a priest-physician, and the traditional Charaka was in many ways his Indian counterpart. The Greek physicians established their hospital camps round the mineral springs."

"Then, the efficacy of mineral springs was discovered in a very early age!" remarked Celitia.

"The idea of becoming healed of disease by bathing in certain springs is frequently alluded

to in the Bible," said Tara. "Naaman the Syrian was cured of his leprosy by bathing seven times in the Jordan at the command of the prophet Elisha, and although a miracle is implied it is probable that the Jordan, which flowed into the Dead Sea, was strongly impregnated with salt and bituminous substances. The Pool of Bethesda was known as a healing spring."

"Most great rivers in the East are considered sacred on account of the blessings they bring to the lands through which they flow," said Ram Singh. "The Egyptians worshipped the Nile as we do our magnificent Ganga and Godavery. Even comparatively insignificant streams, like the Thames and Severn in England, were supposed to be haunted by their tutelary deities. In the same way the primitive natives of the vast American forests adored the elementary spirits they believed to exist in the mighty trees and rivers of their continent."

"We do not perhaps sufficiently see our Creator in His works," remarked Tara thoughtfully.

He walked away to meet Mrs. Ochterlony, who was fanning herself vigorously with a large ostrich-feather fan.

"Have you found out yet who Mr. Ram Singh really is? If I saw as much of him as you and Miss Scott do, I should know all about him by this time," said Mabel.

"He is a delightful man, whoever he may be,"

replied Tara. "I only wish I could speak his language half as well as he does mine."

"You are quite infatuated about everything Indian. I'm getting as brown as a berry in this scorching sun, and awfully tired of the horrid blasts of hot, sandy air that stifle one by day and night. I'd give something to be back among the heather at bonnie Kildrum."

The waves of heat prevalent in the Red Sea at this season of the year made themselves oppressively felt during the ensuing day, and the travellers were all more or less in a state of collapse. Fortunately, there were but few ladies among the number.

Celitia felt the effects of the sudden change of climate rather acutely, and, after two sleepless nights, fainted one afternoon in her chaise-longue on the upper deck. Mr. Ram Singh, who was playing chess with Lord Tara at the time, came hastily forward to prevent her from falling to the ground, and supported her gently in his arms until the doctor could be called to her aid. She soon recovered, and the pleasure of finding herself so carefully tended helped much to restore her to consciousness. The doctor advised her to rest in a reclining position on deck, where she had the best chance of an occasional sea-breeze, and Ram Singh had the happy idea of ministering to her comfort by setting up a screen of the fragrant cuscus matting—brought by his servant, Sukhdeo. He further sent for a large palm-leaf

fan. He soon had the satisfaction of seeing her fall into a sound, refreshing sleep, and then left her to the care of his attendant, with instructions to continue fanning her while she slept.

Celitia felt shy and grateful the next day when Ram Singh kindly inquired after her health, and, asking her if she would allow him to have the pleasure of telling her, during the sultry hours of the afternoon, the famous Hindu romance of Nala and Damayanti, added that he wished to interest her in everything connected with the manners and customs of India. Celitia, touched by so many proofs of considerate kindness, replied:

"There is nothing I should enjoy so much. It would be like an Arabian Nights' Entertainment, except that the Princes didn't take the trouble to amuse the ladies. It was quite the other way!"

"You will find that we Hindus—I am Rajput myself—know how to treat our ladies rather better than the tyrannical Musalmans of the Arabian Nights. I think you will like the story."

"I am sure I have heard of it," said Celitia. "I delight in Eastern romance."

"May I hear it too?" said Tara. "I delight in Eastern tales of all kinds."

The Story of Nala and Damayanti

Damayanti, daughter of the King of Vidarbha, was celebrated for her extreme beauty. She had large, soft, gazelle-like eyes, a lovely figure, and glossy black hair, long enough to reach almost to her feet.

She was an only child, and many Princes, having heard of her charms, sought her hand.

But she had seen in a dream the handsome Nala, the young King of Nishadha (a neighbouring State), who, having heard of her from a celestial messenger—a dove—had sent by him a love-letter to the Princess, offering her his hand and heart.

So she told her father that King Nala had fallen in love with her, and the King of Vidarbha decided to allow her to choose her own husband.

He sent out invitations to several Princes who had made offers of marriage to Damayanti, including the King of Nishadha.

Nala, while on his way to the palace, was met by three of the principal gods, who likewise desired to win the lady for a bride. They commanded Nala to communicate their wishes to her in a private interview to be obtained by their supernatural intervention.

He faithfully performed their bidding, and, in reply, was told by the Princess, to his delight, that he was himself the chosen lord of her life.

When all the aspirants were assembled at the

palace, Damayanti beheld with dismay four Nalas, the three gods having also assumed this form. Damayanti, however, prayed earnestly to be rightly guided in her choice of the true Nala, and at length found that this favour had been granted to her.

Not dazzled by the flattering homage of celestial beings, she remained true to her chosen suitor, who vowed to her the most constant and devoted affection in return.

The gods at parting magnanimously conferred upon Nala special powers over the elements of fire and water, while Koli, a malicious and impious spirit, threatened him with dire misfortune.

For many years Nala and his Queen reigned in splendour and happiness in Nishadha.

By a careful observance of all religious rites, Nala gave Koli no chance of exercising his evil power over him, until at length on one unlucky evening he omitted a trifling ceremony, and Koli, ever on the watch, immediately took possession of him. Koli first incited him to gamble with a brother who was already in the clutches of the evil genius.

Nala soon became so constant and reckless a gambler that in a short time he played away literally everything that he possessed. He had just virtue enough left not to risk the loss of his wife, who had secured the safety of their children by sending them to her parents. Having lost

his kingdom and his home, still accompanied by his faithful Queen, Nala began his dreary wandering into exile.

They soon found themselves in a vast forest, where at nightfall they sought shelter in a hut.

Damayanti, in her weariness, sank into a deep sleep, and Nala, unable any longer to endure the sight of the distress he had brought upon her, resolved to leave her before greater disaster befell him.

The Queen, upon finding herself deserted and alone, was in despair, but in her solitary wanderings she was consoled by the inspired predictions of a good hermit, and, by his direction, returned to her father's Court, where she found her children again.

Meanwhile Nala, in his wanderings, fell in with a boa-constrictor enveloped in a mass of fire, by which it was almost consumed.

The cries of the perishing creature—which appears to have spoken Sanskrit—aroused Nala's compassion, and he used his supernatural power to subdue the flames. The serpent then, assuming the form of Karkata, the Snake King, changed the handsome Nala into a hideous man, consoling him with the assurance that the venom of the bite, by which the transformation was effected, should prove a source of constant torment to Koli, and that Nala's beauty should in due time be restored to him.

Nala, in this form, entered the service of King

Rituparna, at Ayodhya, as a charioteer, and soon discovered in the groom a former servant of his, to whom he was tempted to reveal his secret.

Damayanti and her parents made every possible effort to discover what had become of Nala.

At length an enterprising Brahman, by repeating at Ayodhya a tale taught him by Damayanti containing an allusion to her peculiar history, succeeded in discovering Nala, which left no doubt in the mind of the unfortunate Queen.

She then adopted the device of persuading her father to send—ostensibly to all the Courts, but in reality only to that of Rituparna—a proclamation to the effect that as King Nala had not been heard of for years his Queen would in three days' time make a choice of a second husband.

Rituparna resolved to seek her hand, while Nala was anxious to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the alarming message.

The charioteer was a good whip. With lightning speed he flew with his master to his destination, and Rituparna, admiring his accomplishments as a charioteer, bestowed upon him in return his own skill at playing dice, which enabled Nala to free himself from the bondage of Koli.

On arriving at Vidarbha, Rituparna discovered that he had been deceived; but as he ought to have known better than to believe in the second

marriage of a Hindu woman, he had to conceal his disappointment, and to witness the sudden transformation of Nala and his recognition by Damayanti.

The happy lovers—once more united—returned to Nishadha, where Nala now recovered from his wicked brother all that had been unfairly won from him, and lived happily with his Queen for many years, until they were taken to a better world.

"That is a charming picture of what the devotion of a loving wife can do to rescue an erring husband from ruin and disgrace, and bring him back to a better life!" said Tara.

"There is generally a good moral at the root of our national literature, although not always apparent on the surface," remarked Ram Singh quietly.

CHAPTER III

AN ENGLISH MISSIONARY

THE Hindu romance which Celitia had heard haunted her dreams that night, and the good King Nala, in all his tribulations, appeared to her under the commanding form of Ram Singh. Still, she had some refreshing sleep, and rose early, before the heat of the sun became fierce and oppressive. She was struck by the devotional attitude of Sukhdeo, the attendant of Ram Singh, who, without showing his usual respectful recognition of her presence, was kneeling on the lower deck, facing the East, folding his hands before him, while he recited audibly a prayer of invocation to the rising sun.

In a few hours' time Aden came in sight, and at that port an English missionary, Mr. Long, came on board. There was a charm and cordiality in his manner that attracted the attention of his fellow-passengers, who lost no time in making his acquaintance.

Upon hearing his name, Ram Singh courteously asked if he were related to *the* Mr. Long who had

won for himself the lasting regard of the Hindu people by the sacrifice he had made in defending the cause of those oppressed by indigo-planters in Bengal in the days before strict laws had been passed for the protection of Hindus in the service of English traders. Mr. Long replied that he was proud of being connected with that good Christian, and had spent more than twenty years of his own life in India. He was now on his way to Cuttack to meet the pilgrims there, and congratulated Celitia warmly upon her courage and kindness in devoting her services to them, assuring her that the natives of India were very grateful to those who befriended them.

"Your experience in India must have been interesting, Mr. Long," said Tara, who was standing near.

"I assure you the more I know of that country the more intensely I feel the difficulty of winning over to Christianity a people so devoted to a religion undoubtedly based upon faith in one supreme God. A vast hierarchical system is firmly rooted throughout the length and breadth of the land, perfect in its organization notwithstanding all the changes that passing ages have brought upon religious and social institutions."

"You seem to have penetrated deeply into the heart of the country," said Tara. "I suppose you have at some time been present at the Bathing and Car Festivals at Jagannath?"

"I have seen them once, and may possibly go

there again this year from Cuttack, if only to be able to contradict, from personal observation, the absurd reports concerning the self-immolation of human victims that are still often circulated in England. The enthusiastic longing to bathe in the sacred water that is to wash away sin, and to partake of the holy food of the Sacrament at the shrine of the great Creator and Preserver of mankind, appeals strongly to those who believe in the efficacy of Baptism and Holy Communion. It is even possible that faith in these means of grace may one day be traced to one common source of revelation from God Himself."

"You approach the subject in a spirit of wide Christian charity that is, I think, too rare among our missionary clergy," said Tara. "Surely our Divine Master did not teach us to judge harshly of the fellow-creatures for whom He laid down His blameless life."

"I confess I am often not in sympathy with the methods employed in our well-meant efforts," said Mr. Long. "The most successful of all missionary orders, that of the Jesuits, which during the first century of its existence devoted itself with extraordinary tact and zeal to the religious conversion of the world, *did* succeed in making converts of the highest in India, especially at the Mogul Court. It is a remarkable fact that these learned devotees, remembering that the first gift of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles was that of tongues, by which they could appeal to the

hearts of their hearers in their native languages, supplied the early Christians in India with translations from the Bible in their own languages, at a time when printed books were rare indeed. It is in striking contrast to this that at the present day the valuable Society of Christian Literature for India, which has for nearly fifty years supplied sound literature—not exclusively religious—at a nominal price, in no less than fourteen Indian dialects, should now have several *hundred* translated manuscripts awaiting publication in India for *want of funds.*"

"I remember hearing Lord Northbrook plead very warmly in support of this Society at a meeting," said Tara.

"Of course, the voyage of Columbus at the end of the fifteenth century, that actually led to the discovery of a new world, was undertaken in the hope of finding a shorter way to the almost unknown land of 'Cathay,' of which so many wonders had been told," said Mr. Long.

"After nearly eight hundred years of more or less complete subjection to her Moslem conquerors, Spain had at length succeeded in freeing herself from their dominion," said Tara; "and after a crusade of centuries, ending in the conquest of Granada, the last stronghold of the Moors, and their final expulsion from Spain, she devoted herself to her new possessions in the West."

"Now entirely lost to her," said Mr. Long.

"She brought to the New World an intolerant bigotry and cruelty that eventually called down retribution upon her head."

"There has been a most violent reaction in Spanish America against all religious bigotry and oppression," said Tara. "I was told by a friend in the Foreign Office a few months ago that the rising Republic of Mexico has recently made very stringent laws, not only separating the Church entirely from the State and instituting civil marriage, but even forbidding religious processions or the wearing of clerical or monastic dress in public, besides declaring all death-bed bequests to the Church or any religious institutions void and illegal."

"It is a very significant sign of the times," said Mr. Long. "We are all much too secular in our views to touch the hearts of a people with the sacred fire that alone lights us to immortality. We have been now two centuries in India, but as yet we seem to have touched but the outer fringe of the social and religious life of the people."

"It will be a long time, I fear, before we become thoroughly acquainted with each other," said Tara; "but the leading Hindu Princes and gentlemen, by their generous advances towards us, are offering us an opportunity of more friendly and intimate intercourse, to which we should cordially respond. It is our simple duty to study the characteristics of a land and people bound to us by the strongest ties of interest and affection.

As it is, Anglo-Indians too often waste their leisure in the idle and frivolous amusements so cruelly shown up by Rudyard Kipling and other observers of life in the East. We do not rightly use our most precious Eastern possession."

"I am convinced that we owe more than we shall ever discover to the sagacious tolerance and support of the Brahman priests, whose influence over the uneducated masses is boundless," said Mr. Long.

"Verily they have their reward in the convenient English railways that convey their pilgrims to the very gates of their Hindu paradise," said Tara.

CHAPTER IV

MOHAN LAL, THE HINDU PRIME MINISTER

Two days after leaving Aden a heavy gale sprang up in the Indian Ocean, and Ram Singh was suddenly attacked with sea-sickness in an aggravated form. The doctor gave him what relief he could, and asked Celitia, with whom he was on very friendly terms, to try her skill upon his patient, who was prostrate and miserable. She had a favourite remedy, which fortunately proved successful in this instance, and Ram Singh assured her that she would not find him ungrateful for what she had done for him.

Celitia wondered to herself what form his gratitude would take, or whether it were but an Oriental way of expressing a deeper feeling. Certainly she liked him very much; he had been so kind and attentive to her when she was ill.

Everyone was glad when the *Nur-Jehan* entered the spacious harbour of Bombay, with the towering, mist-clad Malabar Hills in the background of the bustling port below. The air was laden with the heavy odour of fragrant

flowers and spices that greets the traveller on approaching an Indian shore, and the noise and confusion on board became intolerable while the necessary preparations for landing were going on.

In the midst of the busy scene Ram Singh suddenly appeared on the upper deck, wearing a handsome Indian costume of dark blue silk, richly embroidered in gold, some jewelled orders, and a turban of pale red tissue shot with gold.

The Raja was tall and well built. He had the broad, intellectual brow and full, firm mouth that denote power and decision of character. His fine dark eyes, fringed with long lashes, alike piercing and honest in expression, gave a singular beauty to the typical Rajput face. Celitia had never seen him to so much advantage. He looked every inch a Prince. A special messenger in a golden turban respectfully handed to the Raja a small box of carved sandal-wood. Ram Singh eagerly opened the box, and, kissing the sealed letter it contained, said to Lord Tara: "I am sure you will sympathize with me when I tell you this letter is from my dear wife—the Rani—the mother of my son, who is ten years old to-day. She wished to be the first to greet me on my return, and, as she could not come to Bombay, she wrote to me instead. Ours is a very happy home. I am going to stay a day or two in Bombay, and hope you will honour me by becoming my guest at the Taj-Mahal Hotel

on the sea-front, where I have taken rooms. Miss Scott, I see you look surprised at my transformation, but you will find me always the same at heart. As you are, I hear, accompanying Mrs. Ochterlony to Allahabad, I hope we shall soon meet again at Cuttack. My young niece, who is under my guardianship, has made a vow to visit the Temple of Jagannath this year, and I shall accompany her there, and return thanks on my own behalf for many blessings."

Then, turning to Mrs. Ochterlony, who stood with her big blue eyes fixed wonderingly upon the Raja, he added courteously: "I am not sure that I shall be able to offer you any tiger-shooting this year, as I shall want my elephants for the pilgrimage journey. I hope you will have good sport, and will pay me a visit at Hindupore."

Mrs. Ochterlony, thanking him, said to Tara: "I suppose you will end by going on pilgrimage to Cuttack, too. One could travel to the world's end in such good company! Good-bye, Lord Tara! I wonder when we shall meet again? Come, Miss Scott, I expect the Laird is waiting for us—he had to go with Cook's man to look after those tiresome Custom-house people. We have secured places in the Calcutta express that starts to-night, so we haven't much time to spare."

Raja Ram Singh's retinue came to receive him at the Ballard Pier. The first to salute him was a thick-set man with white moustache and white

eyebrows. He did not look old, but worn. He was evidently a man of resource and energy, not easily moved from his habitual calm and self-control. His stately composure extorted as much admiration as his penetrating and comprehensive glance. His dignity would have become Louis XIV., though he was careful to show deference to every word from the Raja. Not gifted by nature with a sweet temper, his self-control made him agreeable; and his shrewd observations upon passing events betokened a wide knowledge of the world. There was hardly an adventurer in India whom he did not know. The British Intelligence Department could not boast of spies like those at the beck and call of this man. Nothing gave him more pleasure than to trace the hidden motives of official transactions. He knew that public pretexts—the well-known preambles of official acts—did not disclose real motives. His name was Mohan Lal, Ram Singh's Prime Minister.

He had been thirty years in the British service, and, after retiring with a handsome pension from it, took charge of Raja Ram Singh's estate. While a civil servant of the Government he was often in charge of the "S. B."—the Secret Branch of the Intelligence Department—and thus was behind the scenes. The secret of race-feeling in India was his pastime—it enabled him to take a comprehensive view of the political incidents that puzzled the

Anglo-Indian official. Knowing both English and Hindustani well, he was able to deal direct with British and native authorities, as occasion arose, without intermediaries and interpreters—the curse of good government in India. His subtle Hindu intellect, the result of centuries of strict caste rules, enabled him to examine every item of the news in its relative position to known facts, and therein lay his marvellous success as Premier to a Rajput Chief.

Evening had set in, and Tara gladly accepted the Raja's friendly invitation to drive with him to the hotel. The excitement of the voyage had told upon Lord Tara, and he was restless and sleepless during his first night in India. At a very early hour he rang his electric bell, which was promptly answered by a smart, handsome Hindu attendant of the hotel, lightly clad in a white cotton garment, and wearing a pink muslin turban. The attendant made a respectful salaam.

"Can you speak English?" was Tara's first question.

"Oh yes, my lord—I learnt at the English college."

Tara stared at the waiter—a college man! "I wish you could send me to sleep. I haven't closed my eyes all night."

"Let me try Indian massage, my lord," said the ready Bhima—for that was his name. He fetched some soothing perfumed oil, which he rubbed gently and skilfully on Tara's temples

and the back of his head, with a monotonous stroke of the hand that had a somnolent effect upon the patient, and in about a quarter of an hour Tara sank into sound, refreshing slumber.

Bhima looked with satisfaction upon the success of his efforts, and said to himself, as he quietly left the room: "He has a noble face—looks good! He won't want me again just yet!"

A note from the Raja was brought about eight o'clock, inviting Tara to a morning drive after his early breakfast.

A landau, with a pair of superb black horses, was awaiting the Raja and his guest.

The drive through the crowded thoroughfares of one of the most cosmopolitan places in the world, where East and West seem to meet, and where the red-canopied ox-waggons and other primitive vehicles run by the side of the modern tramways, smart English carriages and motor-cars, was most interesting. Tara beheld with interest this first glimpse of the varied inhabitants of the Empire making their home in Bombay. At last he said: "I have often heard of the graceful walk and movements of the Hindu women, but I never saw so many beautiful girls as we have passed during the last half-hour. Those long, soft saris, draped with such exquisite taste round their delicately-formed limbs, are so becoming as they glide along the street. They look gentle and modest, too."

The Raja looked keenly at Tara as he remarked,

"Englishwomen, too, are often very beautiful. Have you never been in love, Lord Tara?"

"I suppose I am hard to please. I have not yet met anyone I could really love. The girls one meets in society are good-looking enough, but they have lost much of the feminine grace and softness they had before they took to such violent exercise, physical and mental. I feel quite ashamed of my countrywomen sometimes when I see the sprawling, inelegant attitudes of the lady golf and hockey players, and the free stride and swinging arms of our athletic girls. They certainly don't get as much admiration and respect from us as in the old days, before men were allowed to smoke in almost every lady's drawing-room without even asking permission."

"We are kept in much better order in India, Lord Tara, although I dare say you are under the mistaken impression that our ladies do not rule even over their own homes. I assure you the Rani is quite a despot in her way. For one thing, she chooses to have no English gimcrack furniture or gaudy carpets and curtains in her palace. Everything about her is Indian, as it should be, and she loves to encourage the exquisite native taste for harmony in colour and beauty of design. Her dresses, made to her own order, are marvellously rich and refined. She likes me, too, best in Hindu costume, which, she says, is most becoming, as it certainly is the best suited to our climate."

"The Rani is quite right," said Tara. "The Queen-Empress, whose taste is proverbial, has had a great many of her Court dresses embroidered specially for her in India, and constantly wears them on State occasions; so does the Princess of Wales. I'm wondering who the groups of Hindu men and women are I see walking in a kind of procession in different parts of the town."

"They are pilgrims who have been recruited by our indefatigable pilgrim guides, and are about to start for the great Car Festival at Puri. Poor things! we all help them a little on their way, so that they can get an occasional lift on the railway," replied the Raja.

"I have some idea of going to the Festival, too," said Tara thoughtfully. "I don't feel in the mood for tiger-shooting, and I don't care to stay too long in Calcutta. I see quite enough of my own people at home."

"Perhaps you would like to spend a week with me at Hindupore instead of going on to Calcutta at once," said the Raja graciously.

"Your Highness is kind indeed to honour me so highly. I intend to engage a Hindu servant to travel with me while I am in India. One of the hotel waiters, Bhima, would, I think, suit me very well," said Tara.

"I know him; he's a capital fellow. I don't think you could do better. He was a student at an English school here, and was plucked at the

matriculation examination; so he came here to the hotel, where he thought his English would be useful. He has seen a good deal of life. He is devoted to his religion, and is constantly visiting the shrines."

"He will be very useful to me, as I don't know a word of Hindustani. I tried to find someone to teach it when I was at Oxford, but there was no Hindu professor there. Now that the War Office has at last recognized the necessity of foreign languages for the army, and the Admiralty the necessity of geography for the naval cadets, perhaps in time the India Board may require a competent working knowledge of one or two native dialects in those who are to spend the best years of their life in India. I only wish I were rich enough to establish a Chair at all our public schools and Universities for a native professor of Oriental languages."

"We may live to see it," said the Raja. "You certainly can't know people till you can talk to them in their own language."

"How beautifully your Highness speaks English!" said Tara.

"I had a very good English tutor for five years when I was a boy. He had been in the Indian Army before the Mutiny, and my father was kind to him when his regiment was broken up afterwards. He had been very fond of his Sepoys, and they took care he should escape. I am glad we are back at the hotel; it is getting

too hot to be out in the sun. Will you accept one of our muslin scarves to wind round your panama? It is lighter than the usual pagri. I will send it to you when we go in. I hope to see you at dinner this evening in my rooms, and have asked Mohan Lal to come, too."

In about half an hour's time Bhima brought a long roll of finest Indian muslin to Lord Tara. It was fastened with a diamond brooch in the form of a Viscount's coronet, the Raja's gift.

"How very kind!" said Tara.

"His Highness likes you, my lord," said Bhima gravely. "It is not everyone the Raja likes."

"He has spoken of you very favourably to me. I want an attendant for the next three or four months, while I am in India, and I think you would suit me. Would you like the post?"

Bhima hesitated a minute, then he said:

"I should be proud to accept your offer, my lord, but I have sworn on the holy water of the Ganga to join the pilgrimage this year, and I dare not break my word. The busy season at the hotel is over now. I was out of work three months last year, and 'Jaisa dam, waisa kam'—'No song, no supper.' I must give a thank-offering now."

"I have friends going to the Festival this year, so I shall decide to go there, too. You can come with me if you like," said Tara.

"Thank you, my lord. I will be a good and

faithful servant. I have had hard times till now, but, as our proverb says, 'When God is kind, all are favourable.'"

"You will have to teach me some more Hindustani."

"You will soon learn, my lord. You are not like the people who live twenty or thirty years in India, and never take the trouble to speak to us properly in our own language. They say very queer things sometimes. Long ago I was a chaprasi (a messenger who wears a chapras, or brass badge) in the family of Sir Marmaduke Richards at Poona. There were several ladies in the family, and I had enough to do to carry about their chits (notes), and bring them answers. If they wanted to borrow a book or newspaper, or to buy a bootlace or a pair of gloves, a chit was written. Even from one part of the house to another chits went flying about, and I was generally on the trot from morning to night. It was amusing sometimes. One of the best stories was that of the rats."

"What was it?" asked Lord Tara.

"Lady Richards had been complaining to a friend that her carriage horses, although they were allowed plenty of grass and grain, grew thinner and thinner every day. He advised her to try them with oats. She accordingly wrote a chit to the lady next door to ask her the Hindustani word for oats.

"I brought back the answer, and the coach-

man was sent for. He came in full state and made his salaam.

"My lady said: 'Why are the horses so thin?'

"'How can I tell, mem-sahib? It is the will of Allah; what can we do?'

"'But what do you give them? What do they eat?'

"'Every day each one gets four seers [8lbs.] and sixteen bundles—four seers of grain, sixteen bundles of grass."

"'But don't you give them any rats?'

"'How can I do so?'

"'No wonder they are thin. In England we give our horses lots of rats, and they are so nice and plump.'

"'Oh, Father!'

"'Every day give them one seer of rats, mixed up with their grain. They will soon grow fat.'

"'How shall I get them?' said the poor coachman, puzzled.

"'In the bazaar, to be sure. There must be rats in the grainseller's shop.'

"'Too many there.'

"'We'll get a maund [80 lbs.]. Have you got money?'

"'Yes, but they are not to be sold.'

"'Why not?'

"'How shall they be caught?'

"My lady at last began to smell a rat, and dismissed the coachman to talk over the mystery

with the syces (grooms), while she consulted the judge.

"Knowing the peculiarities of his lady's handwriting, he at once decided that the mistake came from the likeness between her 'o's' and 'r's' in the note she sent.

"I don't know whether the poor horses ever got their oats."

CHAPTER V

MR. HUNT, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE

THE arrival of the Raja at Bombay had been closely watched by Mr. Charles Hunt, now on special duty—keeping an eye upon the movements of the Raja Ram Singh. He determined to find out who the aristocratic-looking young Englishman was who drove with the Raja to the Taj-Mahal Hotel.

The father of Charles Hunt had been an English soldier serving in India, and his mother an ayah, or Hindu maid, to Mrs. Gilchrist, wife of Colonel Gilchrist, of the Hallamshire Regiment. In those days there was no law recognizing the marriage of a European with a Hindu woman.

Dukhia, Mrs. Gilchrist's ayah, was not exactly in love with Hunt, but, being employed in the same house, they met often. Hunt hated military duties. He much preferred to spend his seven years in India as orderly to the Colonel of the depot. He wanted Mrs. Gilchrist to put in a good word for him, and therefore was anxious

to get round her maid. Dukhia had picked up a little English, and was not averse to mild flirtation. Hunt and Dukhia often spent their evenings together when Colonel and Mrs. Gilchrist went for a drive about 5 p.m.

As the Colonel was fond of billiards, and Mrs. Gilchrist liked a little quiet chat with the youngest subalterns, they invariably spent about two hours at the club. This gave Dukhia and Hunt about three hours every day in each other's company. Soon there was talk in the servants' quarters, and Mrs. Gilchrist came to know that in the course of flirtation they often put out the veranda light. This was too much for Mrs. Gilchrist, and she told her husband to warn Hunt. The Colonel, though now fifty-three, remembered his younger days. He had himself sown wild oats, and why should he stand in the way of poor Hunt getting a kiss from Dukhia? Besides, Dukhia had no husband. Anyhow, he decided to warn Hunt not to let Mrs. Gilchrist hear of their flirtation.

He sent for Hunt and asked for an explanation. Hunt was an honest fellow; he admitted having kissed Dukhia; he assured the Colonel it was an innocent kiss. The Colonel smacked his lips, remembering how a Lepcha girl had given him a kiss at Darjeeling twenty-five years ago!

Mrs. Gilchrist was not satisfied with her husband's assurance that everything was all

right. She sent for Dukhia. The Hindu maid came trembling.

"I hope there has been nothing more than an innocent kiss between Hunt and yourself," said Mrs. Gilchrist rather nervously.

"Mem-sahib," cried Dukhia in anguish, "how can I kiss Hunt Sahib?"

An innocent kiss is unknown to the Hindu mind. In a country where no girl above the age of ten is ever kissed even by a father or a brother, a kiss has quite a different significance from what it has in the West. Dukhia was not going to plead guilty to such a charge. Besides, she knew that other servants were listening to what was going on. Confession of a kiss is bad enough in all cases in India, but a confession to kissing a European would spell ruin. She believed in "Tell a lie and stick to it." That is how Dukhia reasoned with herself.

All the same, while in the presence of Mrs. Gilchrist, whenever the name of Hunt was mentioned Dukhia blushed; but a brown face hides a blush—at least, to the European eye. Mrs. Gilchrist knew nothing of Dukhia's feelings. She, however, told Dukhia that if the veranda light ever went out she would have to leave at once.

Dukhia made a deep bow, and left the presence of her mistress.

At five the Colonel and his wife went out as usual. Dukhia found an opportunity to tell

Hunt what had happened. Hunt thought the game was up. Dukhia was not so hopeless. The dinner-hour arrived. In a big Indian bungalow the kitchen is generally about a hundred yards from the dining-room, and for this reason the servants in India get more freedom than in England. The ladies of the bungalow, too, can have a pleasant time with the young subalterns without being overlooked by the servants. All the men-servants have to help in bringing dishes from the kitchen. After Mrs. Gilchrist was dressed for dinner, Dukhia had nothing to do until her mistress wanted to retire for the night, so she had quite three hours to herself. By a peculiar coincidence, the Colonel also did not want Hunt during those three hours. That did not strike Mrs. Gilchrist.

Both Hunt and Dukhia repaired to the veranda—the Indian counterpart of a servants' hall.

"Love laughs at iron bars" is an old saying. Love-making grows as a habit, and can no more be given up in a hurry than an opium-eater can give up opium. Even in British gaols in India opium is allowed to prisoners under trial, in certain cases, for the same reason.

Hunt was in despair. His favourite Dukhia refused point-blank to kiss him in the presence of anybody. Even a servants' veranda kiss in India is a much more serious affair than a Hyde Park kiss. The only occupants of the veranda

at the time were Hunt, Dukhia, and an old man named Lachman, who was employed in working the punkha that hung over the dining-table. A cane passing through the wall connected the punkha-puller in the veranda with the mighty fan in the dining-room. Lachman received five shillings and sixpence a month for working the punkha eight hours every day. For a whole fortnight he had been asking the butler to intercede on his behalf with the mem-sahib for two hours' leave of an evening to enable him to go to the laundress for a change of linen. But, as his very limited income would not admit of a "tip" to the butler, his employers never knew that the poor punkha-puller wanted leave.

Dukhia knew this. She went to Lachman and condoled with him in his trouble. This made Lachman communicative, and he begged her to work the oracle for him, and get him off for a couple of hours. Dukhia, with her usual tact, suggested that he might go to the laundress that evening, and she would work the punkha till his return. This unexpected kindness overpowered him. But suppose it were found out? Dukhia replied she would say that poor Lachman was stung by a scorpion—so plentiful under the crotons in the veranda — and she had allowed him to go and apply juice of the tamarind, an old recipe given her by her grandmother. This settled poor Lachman's qualms of conscience, and he left, feeling very grateful to Dukhia.

Hardly was Lachman out of sight when she pretended to be tired, and gave the rope of the punkha to Hunt. He went on pulling the punkha, with Dukhia on his knee, telling him how she had fooled that cat—the mem-sahib. They both enjoyed the joke immensely. The table-servants noticed that Mrs. Gilchrist did not that evening find any fault with the moorghee (fowl), which they knew was not what it ought to have been. The fact was that Mrs. Gilchrist was too busy watching the veranda light. She knew that Dukhia would never kiss Hunt in the presence of the old punkha-puller. In the East old age is respected; precedence is generally by age, and not by sex, as in this country. Dukhia, however frisky, must behave with decorum before another servant old enough to be her father.

Time went on. Hunt's regiment returned to Aldershot in the following April. In the month of May the advent of a white baby with black hair in the servants' quarters of Colonel Gilchrist's bungalow reached the ears of Mrs. Gilchrist. She rushed to her husband: "Didn't I tell you?"

Dukhia's relations refused to have anything to do with her or her baby. Colonel Gilchrist was a kind-hearted man. He allowed her to live in a corner of the stables. They called the boy Charlie. Even his mother had not a kind look or word for the unfortunate half-caste boy, who was not to blame for the fault to which he owed

his existence. Little Charlie was a healthy child, and, being of a defiant nature, was able to hold his own against all odds as he grew older. Colonel Gilchrist's butler, Husain Khan, as a proud Mahomedan, could not and would not tolerate the mischievous freaks of a half-caste lad, and Charlie not seldom got a flogging from him for his rudeness. But this only developed his cunning. Before Husain Charlie was as quiet as a lamb, but when he carried a letter for the Colonel to the club he turned up his nose at "native" messenger-boys. He was hardly seven when his unfeeling mother Dukhia sought the protection of a Mahomedan horse-dealer, leaving Charlie behind her as an encumbrance to which her new lover, Ahmad Ali, objected.

In the regimental school Charlie picked up some English, and, as he grew up, discarded the turban for the sola-topee, the Anglo-Indian sun-hat, which, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. A man with a sola-topee may, with a third-class ticket, travel in a first-class carriage or abuse the native policeman with impunity, or he may get a good billet through nomination which he has not the remotest chance of getting through the open door of a competitive examination. If the man has a fair complexion and is brazen enough to ape the ruling class, there is no limit to his possible success in life. He may be the son of a Dukhia, but, if in the Government service, he may bully the greatest Indian Prince.

It was, therefore, a red-letter day in the life of Charles Hunt when he adopted English dress. His next move was to practise the art of dissimulation. He could not forget his bitter inheritance of obloquy. His future depended upon the success of his struggles against prejudice and hatred, for he knew to his cost that the Eurasian was hated by both the nations representing his parents. The only way he could hope to get a living was to abuse his mother's people. His self-confidence was great. He had a fair skin—he looked a sahib, though he was not one. His thoughts turned to the police. In India a white policeman is somebody. His only patron, Colonel Gilchrist, had left India for good. Hunt was getting a miserable pittance of fifteen rupees (one pound) a month as a billiard-marker at a Calcutta club. A happy idea struck him. The next morning he went to the fashionable market of Calcutta—the Municipal Market. There ladies—real ladies—go to buy fruit and vegetables. Having been brought up in a Colonel's kitchen, Hunt knew the ways of the mem-sahib. He also thoroughly understood servants' tips—known in India as dusturi—without which it is hard to get on with Indian domestics. Presently two young ladies in a landau drove into the market. They were the daughters of Sir James Greene, Governor of Barrackpore. Hunt was on the alert. At last luck was in his way! He volunteered his services, cleared the way through the

crowd, and bought the young ladies Nagpore oranges for half the market-price—a dozen real Malda mangoes for fourpence—a mere song!—and a large hilsa fish for sixpence. The ladies were delighted. They did not know that Hunt had told the Hindu shop-keepers that the ladies wanted the things as a sample for a large order next week, for the wedding luncheon of the Governor's daughters with two young noblemen coming from England by the next P. and O. steamer!

Hunt made a profound bow as the ladies drove away from the market.

That very evening Mr. Hunt was seen in the servants' quarters at Bellevue, the Governor's palace. He had with him a basket of fruit for Kariman, the wife of the coachman, who was Lady Greene's ayah. Kariman, though a married woman of twenty-two years' standing, was carefully guarded by her jealous husband. In obedience to Mahomedan custom, Kariman was behind the purdah—the thick screen in Mahomedan houses that separates man from woman. She viewed the fruit from behind the purdah, and gave her salaams—the Mahomedan equivalent of thanks—to Mr. Hunt. A conversation followed between the two in whispers. There was nobody near, but it is not the thing for a Mahomedan woman to speak aloud—it is not considered respectable. "A pair of gold bangles the day you get me a post in the police."

said Hunt to the Governor's ayah as he made his parting salaam.

He had not to wait long, for the young ladies put in a good word for him. Sheer bravado soon enabled him to sneak into the Intelligence Department, and then he considered himself a made man. Every bazaar rumour was put down in his secret diary as a fact for which he had "the highest authority," a phrase often carrying conviction to unthinking people. Mr. Hunt was quite destitute of gallantry, and always ready to lend a helping hand towards persecuting a friendless woman. He hated Mohan Lal, his former chief in the Intelligence Department, who had often had occasion to question the authenticity of his reports. It was, therefore, a great satisfaction to Hunt to hear that the Raja Ram Singh had fallen under official displeasure, and might be harassed by petty supervision.

Still, it was rather a dangerous game to play with a Raja who had so many devoted adherents. If any of them took it into their heads to throw Hunt down a well, or otherwise get rid of him, he could make no report of that occurrence.

CHAPTER VI

LORD TARA AND MOHAN LAL

THE Raja was very gracious to his English guest at the dinner on the last evening of his stay at Bombay. He invited Lord Tara to visit him at Hindupore for a week or two on the way to Barrackpore. Mohan Lal would, he said, do the honours of the house for him, as Indian etiquette had to be observed at home.

So Tara accompanied Ram Singh and his suite in the special saloon engaged for the journey to Allahabad, where carriages awaited the Raja. On this occasion the Rani, with her little son, had driven in a closed carriage to meet her husband upon his return from abroad. Tara and Mohan Lal occupied the second carriage.

The drive was almost like a triumphal procession; thousands of Hindus and Mahomedans crowded the road along the whole route to welcome home their beloved Raja.

From time to time a solemn ringing chant, full of pathetic tenderness, struck upon the ear like a call to prayer.

Tara felt touched to the heart by the strange

mystic charm of the unknown appeal, and his deep blue eyes were for a moment dimmed with tears.

Mohan Lal was astonished to see this sympathetic emotion in an uninitiated stranger. He had, in his long experience, witnessed so much callous indifference on the part of the ruling powers to the most cherished feelings of his people. He said gently: "You have a sensitive heart, my lord; you feel something of the charm that appeals to the innermost chord of a Hindu heart. The chant we hear is the family mantra of our Raja, the peculiar melody of which is known and loved by all who owe him any allegiance. In a country of earthquakes and floods, plague and venomous snake-bites, ours is a life of constant and sudden change. To remind us of this our wise ancestors composed for us the soothing mantras, which we learn from our earliest childhood."

"I have never heard of this before," said Tara thoughtfully.

"It is difficult for an Englishman to understand the hold that religion—call it superstition, if you like—has upon the masses of the people of India," replied Mohan. "India has been under foreign rule now for about a thousand years. Her foreign rulers have included some iconoclasts of Central Asia. They did everything to break the faith of the Hindu in his creed, but failed—miserably failed."

"A very good missionary I met on board the *Nur-Jehan* told me that the earnestness and sincerity of the Hindus in their religious duties were seldom equalled by Christians," said Tara.

"In theory, Hinduism makes no converts," said Mohan, "yet it converts more than most missionary agencies. For instance, the Mahomedan of India, tempered by Hindu associations, is quite a different being from his co-religionists in Central Asia. His fiery iconoclastic practice is so much softened that not seldom he himself reverences the Hindu gods. Hindu associations have taught him the superiority of spiritual to natural man."

"The Raja seems very popular with his people," said Tara.

"So he ought to be; he is their friend, and they know it. Loyalty in India, if founded on sentiment, is a very real fact, but the Hindus are the most conservative people in the world. They cling to their beliefs with incredible steadfastness, and, next to God, they have faith in their native Rajas. That is why the manner of espionage in British India is so much to be regretted. It estranges the masses of the people when one of their Princes of ancient and honoured descent, whose loyalty to the Sovereign Power has been proved in the willing submission of his followers for more than a century, is subjected to slight and indignity. For instance, just before the Raja Ram Singh went to Europe his name

was actually entered in what is called the 'Black Book' of the Secret Branch of the Intelligence Department as a person not above suspicion, because he had not chosen to receive a verbal request for an elephant, sent through a chaprasi —whose pay is two shillings a week—from Mrs. Ironside, wife of Colonel Ironside, the Resident at Hindupore. The Raja sent a polite message, in return, that if Mrs. Ironside would write a request he would accede to it with pleasure."

"He was perfectly right," said Tara indignantly. "It's a serious thing for official people not to know manners in a country of caste like India."

"All the same, he has been followed about ever since he landed in Bombay by one of the lowest scoundrels ever employed in the Secret Branch. I saw this fellow, Charles Hunt by name, at the station to-day. Of course, he's a coward, and a little afraid of me, too; still, it is humiliating for the Raja to be watched as if he were an anarchist and carried bombs in his pockets."

"It is perfectly incredible to me," said Tara, who became lost in admiration as the "Rani-Vilas" Palace came into sight. The gradual approach to the lofty terraces and spacious marble staircases surrounding the abode was by a hilly winding road, well shaded by the luxuriant foliage of the mango and the litchi trees that formed a towering arch above groves of orange-trees in bloom. These gave fragrance and fresh-

ness to the air, and the fragrant jasmine added its delicious scent as sunset drew near.

"Rani-Vilas," or the "Queen's Delight," was about eleven miles from Allahabad Fort, on the Ganges. Its situation was striking, for it stood on a hill, and for miles around could be seen its towers and cloistered columns. Almost every form of architecture was represented in some part or other of the palace. Here was a Gothic arch, there a Moorish colonnade, while the halls and doorways were Italian in style, modified by Oriental taste. The gardens and grounds extended for miles, and in the month of May the mango avenue leading to the river-side presented a magnificent sight, the boughs of the trees being laden with lovely refreshing fruit, and the whole affording a welcome protection from the scorching rays of the sun. The bank of the sacred river was high, with young, closely-planted bamboos, which gave it a picturesque appearance. On one side there was a hut inhabited by a Hindu hermit—a bairagi.

For the use of his frequent guests the hospitable Raja had an attractive bungalow, which stood in a lovely garden, separating it from the Rani's palace. The bungalow—a long, low building, with balconies and verandas of trellis-work, covered in profusion with roses and jasmine—was fitted up somewhat in English fashion, though the carpets and furniture were all Swadeshi—made in India and Oriental in style.

The Raja himself met Tara at the entrance to the abode of his guests, and, offering his right hand—the courteous Rajput greeting—welcomed him to the house, and promised a visit the next morning, leaving him to the hospitable care of Mohan Lal for that evening.

Soon after dinner a walk in the garden was suggested, Tara being tempted by the brilliant moonlight—the moon is nowhere more lovely than in India—and they soon found a natural arbour formed by a spreading banyan-tree.

"This is the most beautiful place I ever saw in my life," said Tara, "like the Vale of Cashmere. If there's an Elysium on earth, it is this."

"Ours is a beautiful land, Lord Tara; you may well admire it."

"This wonderful country seems to me to have retained all the old feudal spirit that has completely died out, even in Scotland and Ireland, now. I feel as if I were in an enchanted forest, and all the trees and flowers had something to say."

At that moment Bhima appeared, bearing a gold tray, on which was a beautifully-shaped goblet of rock crystal. He presented the cup to Tara with great respect: "From His Highness the Raja, my lord."

It contained a mysterious pink liquid, which looked like a mixture of French wine with German waters. It really was a sherbet anar (pomegranate juice)—not extracted by a lemon-

squeezer, but by the mystic pressure of the tiny fingers of a Rajput Princess.

She did not forget to flavour it with slices of fresh almond and a couple of grains of musk —that queen of Oriental fragrance. The Hindu way of cooling a drink is to ice the fruit itself, and not to spoil the liquid juice by putting a lump of ice into it.

Tara drank it all in one delicious and refreshing draught. As the clear moonlight was reflected at the bottom of the translucent cup he suddenly started, for he saw in it the sweet, gentle face, full of spiritual beauty, of the "Atala" picture in the Louvre! He took up the crystal cup again, but the vision was no longer there. Was it a magic delusion? He felt bewildered and excited—the strange melodious rhythm of the Raja's mantra haunted his senses.

Suddenly he remembered it was getting late, and rose hastily, saying to the Dewan Mohan Lal, who looked tired and worn :

"How selfish you must think me to keep you out so late, after all the fatigue you have had to-day! Pray forgive me!"

CHAPTER VII

PRINCESS KAMALA—HER DREAM

THE pretty residence called " Hawa-Mahal," the " Breezy Mansion " of the young Rani Kamala, stood near the " Rani-Vilas " Palace, in the lovely garden that separated it from the guest bungalow of the Raja.

Rani Kamala was the only child of Raja Ram Singh's brother. She was an orphan, under the care of her uncle, who was like a father to her.

Like most Hindu Princesses, Kamala was a devout Hindu.

The sweet, watchful care and mystical affection of a Hindu home had influenced her early years. Her perfect breeding was a natural heritage to her from her pure Rajput descent. To an utter absence of selfishness was due her regard for the feelings of others, however poor. Her life was pure and simple. She rose before five to be able to bathe before sunrise. After her bath, she worshipped the sun—emblem of God in its warmth and brightness—while she stood facing

the east, with her tiny aristocratic hands folded, the two thumbs touching where her eyebrows met. Then she turned seven times the sacred tulsi (basil) plant, which was carefully kept in a silver pot with costly jade handles.

As she turned the plant round she poured water of the sacred Ganga upon it from a golden jug.

At the full moon Hindu maidens go to the banks of the Ganges and pay their devotions to the River Goddess, who is represented as a beautiful woman sitting on a makara (sea-shark), with a water-lily in her right hand and a lute in her left. The worship of the holy river consists in a bath—dipping the head is essential even for ladies, for the head is the seat of the god—and offerings of flowers, fruits, and uncooked rice. The virgins pray for good husbands, and promise to be kind to them.

After her homage to the tulsi, Kamala turned her attention to the pet cow. She gave her tiny bunches of durba grass with her own hands, and wiped the cow's forehead with a piece of fine muslin. Life in every form is dear to the heart of the Hindu. Kamala had many creatures to tend. Her beautiful Burma pony Moti followed her about like a dog, and always had carrots specially kept for him. Among her pets were a white peacock, a pair of doves, and a silver pheasant.

She also fed the tiny red ants that had an ant-hill on her side of the holy bel-tree. She gave

them sugar, and with her own hands made a little shed with fresh leaves to protect them from the scorching rays of the sun.

A holy Brahman and a few travellers must also be fed before the Hindu Princess could take her meals. In consequence of such provision for the poor, India has needed no workhouses for centuries. Kamala's retainer had everything ready for the Brahman and travellers. They were provided with food under her own supervision.

She then, about midday, took her own principal meal.

Novel-reading and idle gossip formed no part of Kamala's daily routine. After her midday meal she studied for four hours. She knew her own language (Hindustani) well, and had read some English books. She was fond of history and poetry, but she loved best the classical literature of her native land.

In the evening she took a walk in her private park, and received her lady visitors.

Sometimes they read incidents from the "Ramayana" or the "Mahabharata," especially those which referred to the share of Hindu women in the civilization of their people.

Kamala at seventeen was still unmarried. The priests blamed the Raja much for not finding her a suitable husband, as he should have done, but Kamala had a will of her own.

Rajput youths had vied with each other for

Kamala's notice at Jhulan, the seesaw festival of the Hindus, which appeals to Indian youths as the dancing round a maypole once did to English boys and girls, with perhaps the difference that the May Queen may occasionally kiss a favoured swain, whereas the Hindu lassie gives no kisses—at least, not in public. You may live in India twenty years—you would never see even a husband kiss his wife. This is why the people crowd round a railway platform to watch an Englishman indulge in kisses at leave-taking. It gives the Indian, Hindu, or Mahomedan something to gossip about for the next fortnight.

Kamala had lately been to the great Kumbh Fair, which takes place once in twelve years at the confluence of the sacred rivers, Ganges and Jumna, at Allahabad. There, while neck deep in the holy water, she had prayed for a good husband. She was almost in a trance when she saw her mother—long since dead—appear before her in the mist and say: "Kamala, go to the shrine of Jagannath. You were born on the day after the Car Festival—the great Festival of Baba Jagannath—remember that. Take seventeen lotus-flowers—one for every year of your life—and a garland made of seventeen other lotus-flowers. Put the garland round your neck, and throw the stray lotus-flowers into the sacred water at Jagannath. Watch them as they are carried away by the breeze. You will see a fair, handsome young man almost risking his life to

pick up every one of them. He will bring them to you. Then take the garland of lotus from your own neck and give it to him. You will find an excellent husband, and poor Bharat (India) an influential friend. Breathe not a word of this to a single soul."

Kamala opened her eyes. Was it a day-dream —the deep blue sky above her? The bright rays of an Indian sun were refreshing, as it was intensely cold, almost as cold as England in January.

Kamala kept her secret. She only told her uncle that she had been told in a dream to visit Jagannath-Ji before her next birthday, and that she would feel very miserable if she did not. Kamala was very dear to the Raja and his Queen. Kamala's father died when she was a baby, and she was seven when her mother died. Her last words to Raja Ram Singh were: "Educate Kamala; let her follow the ancient Hindu rite of swayamvara—let her choose her own husband." Ram Singh was in much grief. Both he and the Rani promised to respect her wishes.

When Kamala was nine years old a Hindu lady graduate from Calcutta was appointed to educate the young Princess.

Kamala spent her forenoon in "play," as she called it—really in following the religious rites of the Hindu, by which alone she could be in touch with her uncle's subjects. She was descended from the proud Rajput family, which claimed descent from the moon—the Chandravansi, as

they were called. Her ancestors fought against Alexander the Great.

On the morning after Tara's arrival at Hindupore the Raja paid him an early visit.

"I hope Mohan Lal looked after you well. I try to make my English guests as comfortable as I can. At all events, they may be sure that they will never see a London fog in India. Sunshine is our birthright, and we revel in it. How did you like the pomegranate cup I sent you last night, Lord Tara?"

"It was the most delicious draught I ever tasted—nectar indeed!" said Tara.

"It *is* good, I know; we call it sherbet anar. No one mixes it so well as my little Rani Kamala; you must send the cup to be filled again. As soon as my mother heard how clever Miss Scott was as a lady doctor, she took it into her head that she would like to consult her about the neuralgia she often suffers from in the rainy season, especially as she intends making the pilgrimage to Jagannath this year. Her will is law to me, and she wishes to invite Miss Scott to stay with us here, and accompany us as far as Cuttack when she goes to the hospital there. Do you think you could persuade her to come?"

"I expect she would feel much honoured by the Rani's kind notice, and I fancy she may feel rather *de trop* with the Ochterlonys, who have many visits to pay to their friends."

"Then would you be kind enough to drive

over to Allahabad this morning with Mohan Lal and pay a visit to her and the Ochterlonys about it? Perhaps you could persuade Miss Scott to return with you if the Rani sends her a pressing invitation. I know Colonel Greville, too, and you will like him, I think."

Tara gladly promised to do his best, and the result was that Celitia arrived at Hindupore the same evening in time for dinner.

"I confess I am very tired," said Celitia as she said good-night to Tara and Mohan Lal. "I want a good night's rest. I am looking forward to my first visit to an Indian Zenana to-morrow."

The next day, about twelve o'clock, the Raja paid a visit to his guests, accompanied by his little son.

He thanked Miss Scott warmly for complying with the request of the Rani, and invited her to spend the day at the "Rani-Vilas" Palace.

"I assure you the Ranis are all very anxious to know you, Miss Scott. Kamala speaks English a little, and understands it very well. My boy has picked up a good deal of English from me. He has a capital memory, and is fond of poetry, too, for his age. He is our only child, so I dare say we spoil him."

"Do you think he would mind reciting a little Hindu poem to me?" said Tara. "I should like to see if I could follow it all. I have only learnt a few words from Bhima as yet."

"He knows Dr. Cust's Hindustani translation of Tennyson's 'What does Little Birdie Say?' I dare say you could follow that. Now, my boy, give us 'What does Little Birdie Say?'"

Kishen Singh was a handsome little fellow, with large, soft black eyes and beautifully-formed features. His clear, pale brown complexion showed the flush of health in his rounded cheeks and coral lips. He looked well in his Indian tunic of blue silk bordered with gold, a sash of golden-coloured gauze, and tiny jewelled dagger. His turban was of white muslin fastened with a knot of sapphires. He went up to Lord Tara at once, and, standing gracefully before him, gave his recital of both English and Hindustani in a sweet boyish monotone. The refrain was very musical, and Tara thanked the little Raja heartily for his performance.

WHAT DOES LITTLE BIRDIE SAY?

What does little birdie say,
In her nest at peep of day?
"Let me fly," says little birdie;
"Mother, let me fly away."
"Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger."
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

Chota chiriya kya chalata,
Uske ghar par jab din ata?

Chiriya apne ma ko bakta,
Bhagne chahta, uthne sakta.
Baitho, chiriya, aram kar,
Ta zor pakre chota par,
Jab paran zor pakarenge,
Ham uth-bhagne tujhko denge.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
"Let me rise and fly away."
"Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger."
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby, too, shall fly away.

Chota baba kya chalata
Jab nind karke jag uthata?
Jaisa chiriya baba bakta.
Kis taur ma se uth-bhag sakta.
Nindi karo, baba mera,
Ta zor pakre badan tera,
Jáb zor badan pakarege
Tab uth-bhagne tum sakege.

"Kamala knows that—she knows everything," said the little Raja.

"The Rani Kamala is a very popular Princess," said Celitia. "I am glad I shall have the pleasure of knowing her."

"Now I must tell you," said the Raja, "that I am going to celebrate the thirty-third anniversary

of my birthday on Thursday week, so I hope you will stay on for that. We shall have a Rajput fête. First a water-party on the river, for the ladies in attendance upon Gouri, who reigns supreme over the summer harvest. Lord Tara will have an opportunity of seeing—but only at a distance—some of our Hindu beauties, whom I know he admires. The procession down the mango-avenue to the Ganga will be very picturesque. This is a woman's carnival, and men take no part in it. After that our turn will come in a rifle-shooting match. The prize will be a gold bracelet and amulet—rakhi—given by the Rani Kamala. Then we shall have some very pretty fireworks, pyrotechnic balloons, and Chinese lanterns—quite equal to the Crystal Palace."

"I have always heard that they are far better," said Tara.

"But now I want you to see my armoury, Lord Tara. Will you come this afternoon at four o'clock to coffee with me, and then we can go through it together? I have some very beautiful old swords and shields, some of them of historical interest."

"My father has rather a good collection of armour and weapons, too, at Tara. Perhaps your Highness may honour him with a visit there some day? There is good sport in the country near us, too."

"Will Miss Scott be good enough to accom-

pany us now to the Palace? The Rani expects her," said the Raja. Celitia looked very handsome in a simple dress of embroidered Dacca muslin. Little Kishen Singh admired her very much, and offered his hand with affability to lead her to his mother. The Raja was not sure that the Rani would be pleased to find that the lady doctor was so young and attractive. She sometimes took jealous fancies into her head, and was apt to distrust the extreme liberty English ladies enjoyed, especially in India.

CHAPTER VIII

A HINDU ARMOURY—A HINDU BOUDOIR

THE Raja sent his personal attendant Sukhdeo to conduct Lord Tara to the Palace.

Ram Singh was smoking a fragrant cigar to soothe his nerves. He had been banished from the Rani's apartments during Celitia's visit. Coffee was served in silver-gilt cups delicately chased.

The armoury was a magnificent hall with marble columns of serpentine form, the ceiling painted in rich colours with stirring scenes from the warlike exploits of the Rajput Princes in defending Ajmere against the Mahomedan invaders. The floor was inlaid with mosaics in coloured marbles, in which the lion rampant, the family crest of Ram Singh, was represented in various forms of conflict with serpents and dragons of formidable aspect.

The crimson-painted walls of the hall were hung with every kind of armour and weapons in use during a period of more than a thousand years, arranged in chronological order. The Raja

took down a slightly-curved sabre, beautifully damascened in gold.

"This we call a sirohi, and it has always been our favourite Rajput sword. This one is several hundred years old, and did good service in the hands of an ancestor of mine when Shahab-ud-din invaded Ajmere at the end of the twelfth century."

"We, too, have a sword and armour that belonged to an Earl Claremont who took part in the First Crusade, a hundred years earlier than that," said Tara.

"I do not think that there can be many British titles so old as yours, Lord Tara," said the Raja.

"There are very few of the Irish nobility whose titles are older than the seventeenth or eighteenth century, when Ireland was resettled by William of Orange. We went over with Henry the Second in the time of the third Earl. My grandfather refused a dukedom when he came home from India in the early days of Queen Victoria. He preferred to keep the old title that had been in the family for so many generations."

"How very different the English ideas seem to be now! I believe that there are a great many members of the House of Lords who have been raised to the Peerage within the last fifty years because they were richer than other people."

"A hundred years ago England, too, was a country of caste. My grandfather always said

that the secret of Warren Hastings' extraordinary influence over the high-caste Hindus, notwithstanding his overbearing conduct towards them upon many occasions, was his honourable descent from the old Danish sea-king. Most of the men who helped to win the Indian Empire were men of good birth. The East India Company showed great discrimination in the choice of their civil and military servants. The worst of it is that we have lost reverence for most things worth respecting nowadays. Men sell their titles and their honour to the highest bidder, and women of rank do not think it beneath their dignity to become shopkeepers or professional singers or actresses."

"I am glad we keep our caste distinctions in India a little better than that," said the Raja. "You don't seem inclined to marry a plebeian millionaire yourself, Lord Tara."

"Money alone is the last thing that a man should marry for, I think. But, then, I have no expensive tastes. I have not mortgaged my reversion to the castle and estate for the purpose of keeping racehorses, gambling on the Stock Exchange, or starting a theatre for pretty artistes in comic opera."

"All the better for the future Lady Tara, when you do find her."

"Your Highness must remember that we have to be very careful in choosing a wife. We must keep her, and her only, 'until death us do part.'"

"Or until you happen to see someone you like better," said the Raja, with an incredulous smile. "But perhaps you may like to look at this sword. It was the one surrendered in homage to the British Government about ninety years ago, when all the Rajput Princes voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of England."

"That is a very beautiful shield with the lion rampant enamelled upon it," remarked Tara.

"It is made of rhinoceros hide. The lion rampant is our crest, a warlike emblem. That is why it is so often repeated in the mosaics of the floor of the hall."

"We have a flying eagle, with the motto *Aspari.*"

"Here are some modern rifles," said the Raja. "This one is English, a long-range rifle. I dare say it will be used on Thursday, though I shall not shoot with it myself. Our range will be seven hundred yards."

"I have brought a very good gun out with me, intended for tiger-shooting. Perhaps your Highness will honour me by accepting it as a birthday gift."

"It is most kind of you to part with it to me, and I shall greatly value it. I can only accept it on condition that you use it yourself on Thursday. Only Rajput gentlemen are eligible to take part in the competition itself, but you might perhaps like to try your skill against the winner in a second contest."

"I would do my best if your Highness desires it."

"I am sorry that I have an appointment to meet Mohan Lal before dinner, so I must leave you now. I hope you will stay in the armoury as long as you find anything you care to see. I shall meet you again soon, I hope."

Celitia spent a happy day with the Rani Kamala, after paying her respects to the Rani, who knew but little English. A double staircase of white marble led to Kamala's boudoir. Tradition said that the staircase was the work of the same hand that had designed the famous Taj at Agra. The railing of the staircase was made of the fragrant sandal-wood, the banister of elephants' tusks. The floor of the boudoir was of mosaic work of the pattern seen at Delhi. Apsaras and Asuras (Hindu nymphs and heroes) were exquisitely painted on the ceilings. Here the god Indra was making love to Menaka, the nymph of the Hindu paradise. There Draupadi was depicted, flirting gracefully with her five husbands. Everywhere stood marble and jade vases of graceful form filled with flowers, and an all-pervading odour of fresh roses sweetened the air.

When Celitia returned in the evening she showed Lord Tara a beautiful fan of jewelled gauze, mounted in ivory, delicately carved and painted, which the Princess had given her.

"I never saw any girl so perfectly graceful

and high-bred in all her ways," said Celitia. "She looked lovely in her soft, flowing white dress, with ropes of pearls round her neck and in her beautiful dark hair. They were her mother's. She showed me all her jewels, but she may only wear white gems until she is married. She told me about her amulets, too, and what they meant. Everything about her has a delicious scent of roses."

"You have brought it away with you, Miss Scott."

Celitia laughed. "The Rani was kind enough to give me a flask of the attar she uses. It is my favourite scent, too, and reminds me of my mother. Kamala has many pet creatures, who seem to worship her. I had a ride on her beautiful pony, but I was too heavy for him, and as the Princess looked anxious I did not go far enough to tire him. She has invited me to have a ride to-morrow evening in her private park, and will ask the Raja to lend me a horse. She has embroidered a beautiful scarf for the Raja on his birthday, a lion rampant worked in gold at each end upon crimson silk. She speaks English very prettily, and has lent me a Hindustani grammar."

"How do you like the Rani?"

"She was gracious enough, but knows very little English. She soon handed me over to the Princess Kamala. The Raja only introduced me to the Rani, and then went away."

CHAPTER IX

DELHI DURBAR PROCESSION DURING LENT

THE visit of Lord Tara to the Raja Ram Singh was soon known to the inmates of "Rahut Manzil" (the Abode of Peace), where the Nabob Shamshere Khan lived.

The Nabob was a descendant of the Great Mogul of Delhi, and a political pensioner of the British Government. He lived in the city of Allahabad. He was an excellent Persian scholar, and often met Raja Ram Singh to discuss the beauty of Persian poetry, a subject dear to the heart of both. A thousand years of Moslem rule in India have saturated the Hindu with Persian literature, while for centuries the Court language of Hindustan was Persian.

The Nabob, in addition to the pension he received from the British Government, had private means of his own. He was a patron of Oriental learning. After the English took Lucknow and removed the King of Oudh to Calcutta, Khusru Khan, the Poet Laureate of the Court of Oudh, made his way to Allahabad and sought the protection of Shamshere Khan's father, the

well-known General Hyder Jung Bahadur, a personal friend of Havelock and Outram, of Indian Mutiny fame.

Khusru Khan was now about ninety years of age. Throughout Musalman India he was considered the best poet. He was often invited by the Prince of the Deccan to help him in forming a clear idea of the "Peris," the nymphs of Persian literature. Like Tasso at the Court of Alfonso of Ferrara, Khusru Khan was a great favourite. Though the ladies of the Nabob's palace were in strict seclusion, where no man may enter, yet an exception was made in favour of the venerable poet. He moved about where he pleased through "Rahut Manzil." The Nabob had four wives, and, as generally happens, the youngest was the favourite. Khusru gave Meher Begam (the kind lady) lessons in music, and sang extempore songs to her lyre. She was very fond of Khusru, whom she addressed as "Ostadji" (dear Professor). As he was ninety, even the three rival beauties could hardly object to his presence; indeed, he paid them very pretty compliments, too, when Meher Begam was not there.

The Raja had ridden with Lord Tara to "Rahut Manzil" a day or two after their arrival to introduce his guest to his old friend, and the Nabob had invited Tara to spend the evening before the Raja's birthday fête with him.

Tara rode over accordingly, attended by a syce (groom) of the Raja, in charge of the

horses; another servant took a case containing a change of dress. He was received with great kindness by the stately old gentleman, who had been charmed with his kind and courteous manners.

The Nabob was shocked to hear that Tara was unmarried. A Mahomedan nobleman at twenty-seven is the father of a family, with three or four legitimate wives, and well—at least two or three young ladies as khawas, in colloquial Mahomedan parlance, or "unmarried wives."

The conversation soon turned upon more general subjects.

"Were you at the Delhi Durbar?" asked Tara.

"Ah, the Delhi Durbar!" said the Nabob, with a sigh. "It was a grand show, that was all. I almost cried when I received the order to attend."

"Order to attend?" exclaimed Tara in astonishment.

"Well, it was an invitation; but we regard such invitations as orders, for woe betide him who does not accept an invitation from the Government. I told my people that there would be a grand elephant procession to celebrate the occasion, and I had the honour to ride one of the elephants. The procession took place during our Ramazan Fast."

"You mean your Lent?"

"There is a vast difference between the two. You observe Lent by not eating meat only. Our Ramazan is much more severe. From sunrise to sunset we must not let water touch our lips; smoking a cigarette is out of the question. And we Mahomedan Nabobs had to ride elephants, and reach the railway-station through the blinding dust of Delhi. All the arrangements made at Delhi failed to cope with the dust. We read of your London fog, which one could cut with a knife. Well, the clouds of dust during the Durbar were worse, in all conscience. And in that dust for days—while fasting—we had to practise and rehearse our elephants, so that the 'Grand Elephant Procession' might go off without a hitch. Well, Lord Tara, we did everything to please the Lat Sahib. But, as you are kind, I will tell you in confidence that there is a wound in my heart. We are sixty-two millions of Mahomedans, including reigning Princes and Princesses. Surely a little attention might have been given to respect our religious feelings so far as not to appoint the season of our solemn Fast for the Great Elephant Procession of the Durbar. There was no hurry, for the Durbar was some months after the Coronation itself."

"It pains me very much to hear this," said Tara.

The Nabob wiped the tears from his eyes as he said:

"You are a Lat Sahib too, but you would show more, rather than less, courtesy to a subject race. *Noblesse oblige.* ' The rulers that come out to this country demand loyalty, but through sheer ignorance sometimes trample upon it when found. My father's sword cut down many a rebel during the Mutiny. I have a box full of 'letters of thanks' from Havelock and Outram Sahibs. My father was mentioned in despatches, and received a sword of honour, which you may see in my library. In my small way I have always shown my loyalty, but with what result? When the Bara Sahibs [high officials] want subscriptions for anything, they think of me; otherwise I have to 'tip' the Commissioner Sahib's jemadar [orderly] with five rupees before I can see the Bara Sahib himself."

"Surely things are not so bad as that," said Tara, surprised.

"I do not exaggerate in the least," said the Nabob sadly. "You may ask Raja Ram Singh or Mohan Lal, if you like."

Tara looked worried. He said with an effort:

"Why don't you bring these things before the Royal Commissioners?"

"Yes, if there were a Lord Sahib on such Commissions I would certainly go; but it's always the same story—former officials inquiring into their own mistakes. How can one expect them to acknowledge themselves in fault?"

"You are right," said Tara.

"Did you ever hear what Akbar Badshah used to do? He sent his sons to hear and report on the grievances of the people. Our King-Emperor is said to have the kindest heart in the world for all his subjects, yet when the Prince of Wales was here the other day we were simply asked to make a salaam."

"We live under a Constitutional Monarchy—we all have to make the best of it. I fear it has its drawbacks as well as its advantages. But India is not lightly valued—only misunderstood. As we learn to know her better, we shall learn to love her, too, as she deserves to be loved," said Tara.

It was seven o'clock, and dinner was announced.

Khusru Khan took every opportunity of calling the attention of Tara to the charms of beauty and of love, to which he seemed insensible for so young a man. Khusru, who knew English too, volunteered to translate Persian verses to give the Irish nobleman an idea of the graces of Oriental poetry.

After dinner the Nabob said: "I dare say you have not yet seen our famous Nautch, or Indian dance. Raja Ram Singh tells me there will be one, as part of the birthday amusements to-morrow after the shooting-match. I have only a few dancing-girls here, but they often perform after dinner; I think their slow, rhythmic movements very graceful. Perhaps you prefer ball-room dancing, Lord Tara?"

"I very seldom go to balls; we are kept too late in the House of Commons now during the season."

"Though to my head the snows of age have clung,
Yet my gay heart for ever makes me young,"

said Khusru slyly.

"Though to my head the nut-brown locks still cling,
Yet my lone heart doth seldom take a fling,"

replied Tara smiling.

Khusru, delighted, went on:

"Where'er the charmer of my life resides,
Though here my body, there my soul abides."

Tara returned gaily:

"Where'er the mistress of my fate resides,
Still far away from sight she yet abides.
Ne'er shall my fond desire forsake my heart,
Till time itself shall call me to depart."

"You have no soul for love or poetry now, my lord; but your time will come. Sooner or later love claims her victims," said Khusru.

"Khusru Khan knows all about it," said the Nabob. "I am jealous of him sometimes; my wife is so fond of his society that I feel quite *de trop* when he is singing to her accompaniment."

Tara had a delightful ride home in the moon-

light. He passed near the hut of the Bairagi, who was a noble-looking old man. He had once been a rich and powerful chief, and forsook all to devote himself to doing good. He was the friend and consoler of all who were poor and friendless. None ever came to him in distress but went away with some help.

CHAPTER X

PAN-HINDUISM

THE day Lord Tara wandered through the mango-grove on the bank of the Ganges he noticed the hut of the Hindu hermit, the Bairagi. He was anxious to know what Hindu hermits were like. The Indian Fakir has figured in almost every book of travel. In the term "Fakir" Western travellers have confused the Musalman ascetic with the Hindu Sadhu, which includes a Bairagi and various other sorts. Like the Anglo-Indian officials, they live all their lives in India, yet are seldom in touch with the people around them. Tara had read different accounts of the Indian hermit by Mark Twain and Pierre Loti, and seen caricatures of them in the monthly magazines at home.

He expressed his curiosity to Mohan Lal, who offered to take Lord Tara to see the Hindu hermit on the following Sunday, which happened to be full moon. A brilliant moonlight made everything look as white as marble. Mohan Lal carried in his own hands a tray containing about

two pounds of wheat-flour, two ounces of ghee (clarified butter), and half a pound of arahardal (the richest of Indian lentils), besides four ounces of goor (a sweet made from the sugar-cane), and a two-ounce lump of rock-salt.

The Bairagi took only one meal a day—after sunset—so Mohan's present would give him a square meal. He accepted nothing but food from anybody. They arrived at the hut, made of a thatched sloping roof supported by two bamboo poles. The back of the hut was protected by the trunk of a large banyan-tree—that sacred tree which is never struck by lightning, and stands near so many Hindu shrines and temples. The Bairagi sat on a leopard's skin placed on the floor. The walls of the hut were of bamboo lattice-work. The hut was entirely built by the hermit himself. A Bairagi would suffer in the public estimation if he employed a carpenter or a blacksmith ; it would be considered extravagant. A Hindu ascetic reduces his wants to a minimum. The only articles of furniture in the hut were a pestle and mortar, in which he prepared his bhang (hemp drug), used to ward off the effects of extreme heat or cold. It is said that bhang also helps to fix the mind on God.

There were pieces of bamboo lying in the hut that he used as chin-rests and arm-rests, when he got tired of telling his beads in one posture. He had no support of any sort for his back, for that would imply luxury.

As Tara and Mohan came up to the hut they found the Bairagi squatting on the leopard-skin, talking to two Hindu ladies. The Bairagi had strings of beads round his neck. There was a large rosary made of the holy Rudraksha. Tara wondered if the rosary of the Catholic Church came from the East.

The Bairagi was talking to the Hindu ladies, and did not see the Premier of the Raja. Mohan was too well-bred a man to assert himself in any way. There are no chairs in a hermit's hut, so Tara sat down with Mohan on the beautiful lawn.

The two Hindu ladies were seated; the younger was nearer to where Mohan sat. She was about twenty-five, and had a baby in her arms. The elder lady was about fifty, and of striking appearance. The young lady wore many jewels, while the elder lady had none. Mohan translated the conversation between the elder lady and the hermit for Tara. The younger lady sat still, nursing the baby. The elder lady was her mother-in-law, and, according to the custom of the country, they lived in the same house, the mother-in-law being mistress of the household.

Her son was seventeen years of age when he took a fancy to a neighbour's daughter of eleven. They were of the same caste. Instead of the young man proposing to the girl himself, his mother proposed to her mother, and was accepted.

In a week's time the family priest and the village astrologer were consulted. The stars were auspicious. The youth and the maiden became man and wife, according to the law of the country; but in fact they lived separate—he with his people and she with hers. Only on festivals they met. This went on for four years, when the family priest said it was time for the wife to come and live with her lord. For about ten years they lived together, and three children were born to them, all the three dying on the very day they were born. The parents were well-to-do people. They consulted many distinguished English and Indian physicians, and tried their very best to discover the cause of the repeated misfortune. The mother-in-law longed for a grandson. She was a widow; there were only three in the family. The house, she thought, was cheerless without children in it. She once suggested to her son that he should marry again—a Hindu may have more than one wife—but he loved his young wife too dearly to entertain such a proposal. Some of his friends advised him to consult the Bargad Bairagi (the hermit of the banyan-tree), and the mother agreed to give her daughter-in-law another chance. Should the next grandchild live all would be well; otherwise she would seriously advise her son to take another wife. She herself was her husband's third wife, and saved the family by giving him an heir.

So the old lady, eighteen months ago, had sought the advice of the Bairagi. He pulled out a few leaves of the sacred tulsi (basil) plant, rubbed his Rudraksha bead of his japamala, or muttering rosary, on a stone with the leaves of the tulsi, chanted a mantra on his rosary, and, making a pill of the size of a peppercorn, gave it to the young lady, who put it in her mouth, and then drank some of the holy water of the Ganges. They returned to their home, about five hundred miles from Hindupore. An hour or so before Tara arrived at the hut the ladies, with the little girl—named Sadhu Bai, as her life was due to the hermit's blessing—had come to thank the Bairagi. The thanks took a practical and substantial form, for the baby was already seven months old, and had never been ill for a day. The fame of the hermit had spread on the distant banks of the Narbada, and his name had been proclaimed from shrine to shrine throughout India by travelling pilgrims.

The old lady had brought with her a hundred ashrafis (gold coin), worth about two hundred pounds, shawls, and various other expensive offerings. Had the baby been a boy she would have brought a thousand gold coins as a thank-offering. The Hindu hermit refused to touch any of the presents, and roundly scolded the lady for putting temptation in his way. He had been himself a rich chieftain in his day, had lived happily for over twenty years with his wife, four sons,

and two daughters. In one day cholera carried away all except himself. In despair he retired from the world; for this reason he is to-day a Bairagi, or one disgusted with the world. Gold had no attraction for him. He had visited all the sacred shrines of India. While wandering on the banks of the Godavery he met a dying Sadhu, a hermit of great sanctity, and nursed him until he died in his arms. In return the wise man told him of a secret remedy of value to women. Henceforth the Bairagi was credited with performing miracles throughout India, and spreading his political doctrines through powerful female agency. The old lady wiped the tears from her eyes, and said: "Baba, I cannot take these things back home. It would make the gods angry, and we should lose the poor baby."

"Take my advice," thundered out the old Bairagi. "Give the shawls and jewels to brave Hindu soldiers. Don't let the fighting spirit die out in India. A hundred gold pieces will pay the railway fare for two hundred Hindu soldiers of the Indian Army to Jagannath-Ji. Take them with you; that will make them loyal to the ancient Hindu houses throughout India. You will get the blessing of future generations. The Jagannath festival this year is of great importance to all India. You will witness a most romantic marriage there—the wedding of a great Rajput Princess. Your granddaughter will one day rule over Hindupore."

The hermit, suddenly turning round, saw Mohan. He greeted Mohan, who had overheard the whole conversation with the old lady. Who was this strange baby, living five hundred miles away, who was to reign in Hindupore? How about young Kishen Singh? Mohan carefully omitted translating these curious prophecies to Tara. He did not understand them himself. Mohan was naturally anxious to know all about the young lady—the future ruler of Hindupore.

Among Hindus no introductions are needed. If a person wishes to speak to a Hindu lady of rank who is a stranger, it is only necessary to address her as "mother," and the word puts the speaker in a prohibited degree of relationship that forbids undue intimacy and gossip. But Mohan had a different feeling towards this lady. Her voice had appealed to old Mohan Lal.

As the ladies got up to go away, Mohan, addressing the young lady who was sitting near him, said:

"Mother, may Baba Jagannath bless your child! I am going to Jagannath-Ji in a fortnight. I hope to meet you all on the banks of the sacred Baitarni."

The young lady did not speak. She folded her hands in right Hindu style to thank Heaven for such good news. The old lady cheered up. She had found a fellow-traveller, and such a nice old man! Her face was half covered with her muslin sari. True to feminine instinct, she

wanted to have a good look at Mohan Lal. She liked Mohan Lal's face, and admired his acuteness in not having addressed her as "mother." Looking down—that is how the Hindu lady shows her modesty—she said:

"The hermit has ordered us to visit Jagannath-Ji. My son is a young man, and does not know the world. About a shrine there are more rogues than saints, you know. I am puzzled how to take so young a woman"—pointing to her daughter-in-law—"on so short a notice to distant Jagannath-Ji."

"Oh, that will be all right!" answered Mohan, as he pulled his white moustache like a true Hindu gallant. "If you want any information about the journey, I shall be happy to give it to you."

"Then I will wait for you under yonder mango tope," said the elder lady, as the two moved away.

Mohan Lal felt in a peculiar mood. For quite twenty years he had been a widower. He had become used to single life. He had been twice married, and his experience of married life was excellent. Marriage agreed with him. Even his friend, the confirmed old bachelor Sircar, had not a word to say against marriage. He himself felt the evenings rather dreary. He often wished he were a married man. Perhaps he had not met anyone he sufficiently cared for; at any rate, he had not married. But the gossips of

Karimabad said that Sircar was a bachelor because he had met someone he cared for. Nobody actually knew the truth but himself.

Neither Tara nor Mohan Lal was much inclined to talk. The hermit perceived this, so he began to say his prayers. Like "God save the King," it is a polite hint for guests to depart. So Mohan said to Tara: "It's time for the Bairagi's meal;" and both went away.

Tara wished to be alone for a while. Pointing to the ladies under the mango tope, he said to Mohan: "I can find my way to the Palace. I think you would like to speak to the ladies."

It was exactly what Mohan did like. The plain dress of the elder lady convinced him that she was a widow. The diamond bracelets of the young lady showed the importance of the family to which she belonged. Mohan felt it was more than mere idle curiosity that made him wish to know all about the elder lady. As he came near the mango tope he saw a palanquin and a retinue of about twenty men awaiting the return of the ladies at a distance.

As Mohan approached the elder lady came forward a few yards to speak to him. She said:

"You are speaking to the mother of Kedarnath."

In India for a woman to be childless is a disgrace, so ladies who possess children are generally addressed as "mother of So-and-so."

Those who have no children are generally known as "aunt of So-and-so." Their names are seldom used except in deeds of gift or other legal papers, or by the priests at the shrines.

"I am Mohan Lal," was the reply.

"Dewan Mohan Lal, Prime Minister of Hindupore?" inquired the lady, rather surprised at the simple manners of so great a personage.

"You know my name; I do not know yours," said Mohan, with a gallantry he had learnt by associating with Mr. Sircar.

There was a pause. There was no one near to listen to the conversation. The lady blushed visibly in the moonlight. She said: "I am Jamuna Bai."

"Daughter of the Rani of Kasi?" said Mohan, rather astonished.

"Now you know me as well as I know you," said Jamuna Bai, with a coquettish glance she had not practised for years. Mohan Lal had aroused in her feelings that had long been dormant. Again there was a pause. There was a beautiful breeze from the holy Ganges. It blew away the sari from the head of Jamuna Bai. She did not even make an effort to cover her head. To a Hindu lady covering the head is modesty. Talking with the head uncovered implies familiarity. They sat on the lawn. Their names were an introduction; for they were of the same caste, though for generations their families had not been on good terms.

"It is now forty years since, by 'tipping' your maid, I had a look at you at Kasi," said Mohan.

"I remember the incident," remarked Jamuna Bai—"when your mother sent a message to my mother——"

"About *our* marriage," interrupted Mohan.

Jamuna Bai blushed again. Wouldn't she have been happy as young Mohan Lal's first wife, instead of Dwarka Nath's third wife! Dwarka Nath had been good to her. She had no unpleasant memories at all. But she would have preferred being a wife rather than a widow to-day. Dwarka had money, Mohan had brains; Jamuna was a clever woman, and she admired brains. A woman is a hero-worshipper. For the last twenty years she had heard of the diplomatic achievements of Mohan Lal. She had admired him; now they had met, she worshipped him. Her feelings overpowered her. She simply said: "Will you take us to Jagannath-Ji?"

"I will; this day fortnight we start. I will get the Raja to invite you," said Mohan.

"Forgive me, I had better come unknown to the Raja's party. I will send my gomashta [agent] to you; you will give him full instructions. Don't forget Jamuna Bai. After forty eventful years we have met—who knows what the gods are working?" she said, in a voice choked with emotion,

"God bless you!" said Mohan, as he shouted

for the palanquin-bearers. Soon the party had disappeared from sight.

Mohan was haunted by the face of Jamuna Bai, a stately beauty of fifty—a rare thing in a hot country.

Lord Tara had walked down the mango avenue to see what had become of Mohan Lal.

It was now eight o'clock. They went in to dinner.

CHAPTER XI

RAJA RAM SINGH'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

THE Raja's birthday fell upon May 24, during the period of the vernal equinox in India, when throughout Rajasthan the harvest thanksgiving services are held in honour of Parvati, or Isani (the wife of the all-powerful Siva), in her character of "Anna-Purna," or beneficent giver of food to mankind, under the name of Gouri, and clad in the golden robe emblematic of the richness and abundance of her gifts.

The Raja Ram Singh made his birthday the occasion of generous donations to his dependents and poorer neighbours, and generally entertained about two or three thousand of the people of Hindupore—his estate—in large tents erected in open spaces near the mango avenue.

The gifts consisted of vegetables and of mangoes, oranges, grapes, figs, cocoa-nuts, plantains, and other fruits; also of bags of rice, barley, and lentils. There were, besides, rolls of white and coloured muslins and cottons, saris of varied hues, all of Indian manufacture, often

selected and arranged by the fair hands of the Ranis. In the tent appropriated to the women and children Rani Kamala Kumari, with her attendants, was often present to take part in the distribution of clothes, and on this occasion she had asked Celitia to assist her in the arduous work.

The celebrations began about five o'clock in the morning, when the crowds assembled on all the surrounding terraces and approaches to the Palace to chant a solemn invocation to the rising sun. The Raja, with his son, accompanied by Mohan Lal, some Rajput gentlemen, and Lord Tara, stood near to the entrance of the Palace to view the touching scene. A venerable Brahman priest, in his white robes, wearing the distinctive signs of his sacred calling, led the procession, and stood in a reverent attitude before the figure of a goddess, wearing her golden robe, wreathed with lotus, cornflowers and roses, and holding in her right hand a lotus-bloom, emblem of fertility, and in her left hand the warlike conch, denoting her power alike over life and death. The rhythm of the chant, repeated by hundreds of voices, rang out with an earnest pathos that touched the innermost chords of the heart:

"Hail, Source of light! remove our darkness! Giver of the day, have mercy! Giver of the day, look upon the distressed! Forgive the sins of the sufferer. The Cause

of the universe, the Eye of the universe, the Life of the universe art Thou! All-divine, the Refuge of all divinities, of heaven, earth, and hell. Who can describe Thy strength? Thy burning rays consume the hills, and dry up the waters of the ocean. How sweetly the lotus smiles when gladdened by Thee! Preserver of the universe, Purifier of the universe, Thou art the essence of the universe! Convey us safely into eternity. The remembrance of Thee banishes sin. Be gracious to this company."

The sounds gradually died away, and the vast company passed before the Raja with lowly salaams before entering the tents where rest and refreshment awaited them.

Ram Singh turned to Tara with a happy smile upon his strong, handsome face, as he said:

"It is something to live for—the love of one's own people. They are an honest, simple-hearted race, content to toil for their daily bread, and bless God for it. The poorest man works for his wife and children, and shares all he has with them. You will find that the Hindu takes upon himself much of the household labour that falls to the lot of the women in most European countries. He often cooks and washes clothes for the home, while also providing the wood and charcoal required, and this while maintaining his family by his skilled work as a weaver or embroiderer. I need not tell you how artistic

his work is in the carving or designing of our precious woods and metals. The beauty of Indian workmanship is known all the world over. What is not so well known is the sincere religious faith that pervades every action of his life. You see him, as you suppose, bowing down before a lifeless stone image. To him it is merely the symbol that reminds him of the presence of the Deity."

"I quite believe that the poorer Hindu women are better cared for as a rule than those of the working classes in our country. They look much happier, and don't seem to bear quite such a burden of domestic cares," replied Tara.

"Presently you will hear a Hindustani version of 'God save the King.' Our people sing it very well. It happens that I was born on the same date as the Queen-Empress Victoria, so the National Anthem always has a place in our celebration of the day. This year we shall have a feast of roses in honour of our English guests. You must follow our custom, Lord Tara, and wear a garland of roses all day." The Raja, as he spoke, handed a garland of fresh red and white roses to Tara, who immediately threw it over his right shoulder like an order. He was wearing a greyish-green riding-suit, that showed to advantage his tall, well-made figure, and Bhima had arranged the muslin scarf and clasp, the Raja's gift, over a shooting-cap, somewhat in turban style.

"Now I think we will have some breakfast, too," said the Raja, leading the way to the armoury, where a table was prepared for his guests. "About nine o'clock the procession will start by way of the mango avenue to the river-bank, and although Gouri only permits women to attend her on her visit to the Ganga, I think we may, without intruding too far, see the procession pass from a distance," said the Raja. "The general effect is pretty. The shooting-match is at five; it will be cooler then. I expect there will be about a dozen competitors for the prize. The Ochterlonys, with Colonel Greville and four or five officers of the Golconda Hussars, have promised to ride over from Allahabad to see the match. Colonel Greville is a great friend of mine, Lord Tara. You will like him. They will all stay to dinner and to the Nautch and fireworks afterwards, with our Rajput guests."

Just as the procession was about to start, Celitia joined the gentlemen in the armoury. She, too, was wearing a garland of beautiful tea-roses and a wreath of the same round her hat. Celitia said to Tara: "The Princess was very tired after the distribution of gifts. She had a kind word for everyone. She rested for an hour before preparing for the Gouri procession. She was in a white dress embroidered with gold and wreathed with yellow roses, and had a lovely veil of white and gold gauze. She is

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a maid of honour to the goddess, so wears her colour."

"How tantalizing it is of you to tell me all this, Miss Scott!" said Tara.

"We are going to see the procession from the terrace above the mango avenue, Miss Scott," said the Raja. "Don't you think we may be allowed a glimpse of the Peris from that safe distance?"

"If I were the Raja, I should like to see them much nearer," said Celitia, smiling.

"Ah," said the Raja, "but, you see, I must set a good example, especially to Lord Tara; and, then, the Rani is very particular, too. There is a Raja not far from here who always makes a point of going on the river with a party of men in his state barge whenever there is a Gouri festival."

"*Honi soit qui mal y pense* is my motto," said Celitia. "But, then, I have had to work hard for my degree—perhaps the only woman in a class of fifty—so I am used to being looked at. I think, on the whole, the Indian ladies have the best of it. Men learn reverence when they are kept at a distance. Young men nowadays hardly ever take the trouble to lift their hats properly to a lady, and think nothing of lolling about a ball-room half the evening, unless they happen to see someone they care to dance with."

At that moment the well-known strains of the National Anthem were heard from the assembled

crowd, and immediately afterwards the procession began to move slowly down the mango avenue. The boat-shaped car of the goddess, wreathed with golden chains and cornucopias of fruit and flowers, was borne by hundreds of willing hands towards the sacred river, preceded by the beautiful maidens chosen to attend her progress. Among them Lord Tara recognized the graceful white-robed form of the Rani Kamala, but it was difficult to distinguish her features at so great a distance.

As the sun grew hotter the large crowd assembled before the Palace gradually dispersed, and returned to their humble occupations with hearts cheered under their patient toil by the kind sympathy and welcome of their Raja and his family.

Tara wandered away by himself, to find rest and shade in a grove of orange-trees near the mango avenue. He felt a strange wish to look upon the face of the young Princess, who seemed to attract the love and admiration of all who were allowed to know her. How absurd these Eastern restrictions were, after all, and how very easily they could be broken through!

The temptation to find a way to the river and to try to get a nearer view of Rani Kamala was strong for a moment, but honour prevailed. He could not risk wounding the feelings of the kind Prince, who had shown so generous a trust in him. He was hot and tired, too. He took off

the garland of roses and lay upon the grass, amusing himself by watching the antics of a monkey which was chattering on the top bough of the tree above him, vaguely wondering what it had to say, until he fell asleep. He did not wake for two or three hours, and then roused himself to prepare for the shooting contest. The range was prepared in an open plain about half a mile in extent, near the foot of the hill where the Palace stood. It happened to be on the side of Kamala's abode, and one of her windows commanded a view of the ground, though at a considerable distance. About twenty young Rajput nobles took part in the competition, which Colonel Greville and Major Davoren, of the Golconda Hussars, consented to judge. The target was a small one, in the form of a peacock with outspread tail, the aim being to hit the centre of the golden eyes in the tail at a range of seven hundred yards. It was a difficult feat to perform, each competitor being allowed three shots only. Thirteen of the number succeeded in hitting the eyes with more or less accuracy, and the much-coveted prize fell to the young Raja Ranbir Singh, who received it at the hands of Ram Singh with delight. He at once placed it on his wrist, trusting in its charm as an amulet to win for him the hand of the Rani Kamala, who had hitherto refused to listen to his suit.

Raja Ram Singh now called upon Tara to redeem his promise of trying his skill against

the conqueror, offering to the winner of the dual contest a ruby ring.

The young Raja had no wish to share his well-won laurels with the stranger, and exerted himself to outdo his previous achievement; but, instead of hitting the centre of the eye twice out of three times, as before, he only succeeded in hitting it once.

Tara felt nervous, but he had seldom failed to hit his mark, and his hand was sure and steady. He actually succeeded in placing his bullet in the very centre of the gold eyes three times consecutively. The young Raja was too true a sportsman not to admire the feat, and, frankly offering his hand to Tara, congratulated him upon his exceptional skill.

"I think there is much in luck, too," said Tara modestly; "but I have had a great deal of practice in shooting. My father took me out with him as soon as I could handle a gun, and taught me how to use my eyes, too. Before I was ten I was expected to hit small birds in flight."

"After that Kishen will soon have to begin," said Ram Singh, looking fondly at his boy.

The birthday celebrations came to an end with a merry dinner in the armoury hall, a graceful Nautch in one of the tents, and a superb display of fireworks in the grounds.

CHAPTER XII

THE BANDEMATARAM FLAG—A MODEL OFFICIAL

CELITIA went to see Kamala, as usual, the day after the birthday fête.

The young Rani seemed flushed and excited, quite unlike her usual gentle self. Celitia looked grave, and said quietly: "I think, Rani, you are rather feverish to-day. Will you allow me to feel your pulse?" Kamala held out her tiny, delicate hand as she replied: "Perhaps I am. I was too tired yesterday, and did not sleep well—it was so hot in the night."

"Your temperature is much higher than it ought to be. You must let me give you a cooling draught. May I?" said Celitia.

"You are kind," said Kamala. "Stay and talk to me a little while. I have something to tell you."

"I will first write the prescription, which we can send by your chaprasi to be made up," said Celitia.

Kamala had thrown off her embroidered slippers, and was cooling her beautiful little feet

upon the inlaid sandal-wood floor. Celitia made her comfortable with large cushions, and wrapped a Cashmere shawl about her feet; then, sitting down herself on a cushion by Kamala's side, said anxiously: "Has anything annoyed you, dear Rani?"

"Yes, I am vexed," said Kamala. "The young Raja who won my bracelet yesterday was rude enough to send me a love-letter hidden in a bouquet of roses, which he knows are my favourite flowers. I have already told my uncle that I do not like Ranbir Singh. I met him this year at the Kumbh Fair, and he says that he saw me again yesterday. I wore a veil on purpose that he should not stare at me as he did before."

"Why do you dislike him so much?"

"He takes opium, for one thing—I dislike that. Then he is married already. I don't wish to be a second wife."

Celitia laughed.

"It's all very well to think we don't mind it, but my uncle has only one wife, and the Rani would not at all like sharing him with anyone else," said Kamala.

"The Raja is a very good, kind man—you cannot expect everyone to be like him."

"Perhaps not; but I am quite happy as I am; I don't want to be married at all."

"You will find someone you like one of these days," said Celitia soothingly.

"My mother, who died when I was only seven,

made my uncle and aunt promise that I should choose my own husband. We have an old Hindu custom that allows this. That is why I am going to Jagannath, to pray for help. But tell me, Miss Scott, how is it you are not married yet? The Rani thinks you so very handsome!"

"We cannot choose our husbands, Rani. And, then, I am only a poor officer's daughter; my face is my only fortune," said Celitia.

"Has no one made love to you?"

"No one worth having," said Celitia, with a smile. "I sometimes had more attention than I cared for from the medical students when I was working to become a doctor. Some of them thought nothing of giving a kiss as they passed to or from the lecture-room."

"How very shocking!" said Kamala, horrified. "I thought doctors were gentlemen."

"So they are, generally," said Celitia. "But quite half of these young men never become doctors at all."

"Lord Tara is a great friend of yours, is he not, Miss Scott? Perhaps you like him?"

"He was kind enough to use his influence to get me my Indian appointment, but he is a man of rank, and we have some caste left in England still. He would hardly be likely to fall in love with a lady doctor," said Celitia, with a sigh. There had been a time when she thought it possible he might.

"My uncle and Dewan Mohan Lal like him

very much, so he must be nice," said Kamala. "I am glad that he shot better than that young Ranbir yesterday. I wish *he* had got the rakhi bracelet."

"How many poor people were made happy yesterday?" said Celitia, wishing to change the subject.

"It is an Indian custom to make presents to others on a birthday, as well as to receive them," said Kamala, as she took up a sandal-wood box, which she gave to Celitia. "This is for you. I thought you would like to have our photographs when you leave us, and the case is of the pretty filigree work they make at Cuttack, where you are going."

Celitia opened the box, and found a folding frame of gold filigree containing four full-length photographs of the Raja and Rani, their little son, and Kamala.

"What a lovely present! I shall value it more than anything you could have given me. My visit to this Palace of Delights will seem like a dream when I settle down to my work at Cuttack."

The soothing draught ordered by Celitia had now come, and, after giving it to Kamala, she left her to rest for a while, promising to see her again in the evening.

When Tara returned from Allahabad, he found a letter from his old friend Herbert Harvey, now at Barrackpore. He read it to Mohan Lal:

"BARRACKPORE,
"*May* 24.

"MY DEAR TARA,

"I have just read in the *Pioneer* that you are already in India, and actually staying with my friend Raja Ram Singh. You could not be in better hands. I hope you will come on to me soon. I am looking forward to seeing you more than I can say. We have not met since the last holiday I spent at Tara in the 'ould counthry'; it will be delightful to have you here. The Ochterlonys were with me for a few days. They talk of shooting tigers, but Mrs. O. has felt the heat more than she expected.

"I am on special duty, watching the movement of 'Bandemataram' flags. My 'boss' is worried because Superintendent Hunt's report says that on the next new moon the Hindu flag will be hoisted on the plains of Plassey! Don't laugh! Au revoir,

"Ever yours,
"HERBERT HARVEY.'

Mohan Lal replied: "The Raja has also had a letter from Mr. Harvey, who is a great favourite with His Highness. He desired me to ask you, Lord Tara, if you would extend your visit to Hindupore until we go to Calcutta, and accompany us as far as Cuttack. You seem to enjoy being here. It is much cooler than Calcutta, and, of course, no official is there now. If you

will stay we can give you one or two days' tiger-shooting. No doubt the Ochterlonys will be glad to come over for it, so you had better say 'Yes,' and I will wire to them at once. I am glad Mr. Harvey is a friend of yours."

"I have known and loved him all my life. His father is a near neighbour of ours at Tara, and quite as devoted to India as my grandfather was."

"Mr. Harvey is one of the most valuable officials we have," said Mohan Lal. "If there were more like him we should have no unrest in India. He was Political Agent in charge of the Raja Sahib at the Delhi Durbar. He is a perfect gentleman."

"How many Irish gentlemen have been successful in India, from the days of Lord Wellesley down to those of Lord Roberts!" said Tara. "There is, perhaps, something sympathetic in the temperament of Irishmen that appeals to the Hindu nature. I certainly feel as if I had found a new home here. I shall be only too delighted to stay at lovely Hindupore as long as I can."

"Then I will arrange it all for next week. The Raja will be pleased," said Mohan Lal.

Mr. Harvey's father had been in the Indian Civil Service. It was before the days of the competitive system. He was what was known as a "Haileybury man." In those days there were no P. and O. Company's ocean greyhounds

to bring the home-sick Anglo-Indians from Bombay to London in a fortnight. They therefore mostly spent their short holidays in India. If they found the plains too hot they went to the happy valley of Cashmere or to the hill-stations. They accepted the hospitality of Indian gentlemen, and in their company enjoyed sport. English education had not spread much in the country then, so, to enable themselves to carry on a conversation with their hosts, they learnt the native languages. They were able to converse with each other, and thus misunderstandings were prevented. In those days, therefore, there was no general unrest in India.

Young Herbert was initiated into all this by his wise father. To him India was not a mysterious bundle in England's political organization.

His youthful ardour enabled him to grasp Indian questions with sympathy. The accuracy of his father's knowledge cleared up all knotty points. He understood that the conquest of India was due rather to a combination of circumstances than to the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race. In every battle won by England in India five-sixths of her troops were Hindu. Even to-day the power of England in India depends on the loyalty of the Native Army. While Herbert Harvey was still an undergraduate at Oxford he learnt to think for himself. He wanted facts, not opinions based upon untruths,

and accepted as infallible by the ignorant and unthinking public composed of tailors, bakers, and candlestick-makers, whom money had made gentlemen. He pondered on the greatness of the Indian Empire. When his Oxford friends discussed the grandeur of the Greek and Roman Empires, Harvey would say: "See Gibbon. The Roman Empire at its zenith did not contain more than 125 millions of people; the Greek, perhaps hardly so many. Our Indian Empire contains 300 millions. There we have more subjects than the Greek and Roman Empires put together. And yet how little we care to know of our own Empire!"

That opened the eyes of the Debating Club and set them thinking.

At Eton Harvey learnt manners. He took his B.A. degree at Balliol, and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn. But his ambition lay in India. He entered the Indian Civil Service through the open door of competition. He stood at the head of the list. He had just arrived in India when there was a row between the Hindus and the Mahomedans over some religious procession. It happened by a mere accident that a festival of the followers of each of the conflicting creeds fell on the same date. Colonel Ironside, of the Intelligence Department, advised the Government at Calcutta to send three regiments and two field-guns "to keep the natives from killing each other." Harvey was a junior officer.

He remembered his father's words: "In India, Herbert, no arrogance, no row." An idea struck him. He took the papers personally to his chief and respectfully offered his own intervention. From his father's training he understood Oriental ways, and had taken good care to study colloquial Hindustani.

"But, if you fail, the Government will stop your promotion for five years," said the District Magistrate sternly.

"I don't see why I should fail," submitted Mr. Harvey.

In an hour he was on horseback galloping to the scene of threatened riot. He saw thousands of people, with all sorts of turbans.

The followers of the Prophet shouted, "Deen, Deen!" The "mild Hindu," now infuriate, exclaimed, "Jai Kali!"

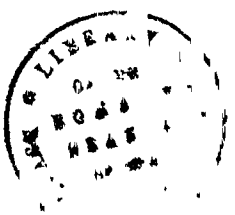
The crowd saw the white man without an escort. They thought he was nobody—not an official. They talked carelessly. Mr. Harvey walked his horse slowly. He watched their impulses—he understood their innermost souls. He stopped near a Hindu priest and spoke to him in faultless Hindustani.

It was a treat to the Brahman—he had never heard good Hindustani from a Briton before. It engaged his attention. A crowd gathered round Harvey; they heard him attentively. He then walked through the crowd to the other side, and addressed the Mullah—the Musalman priest.

The result was the inevitable ascendancy of an intellectual and creative mind. The fighting priests smiled. It was settled, at Mr. Harvey's suggestion, that, as the Hindu worshipped *facing the rising sun*, his procession should pass through the street in the forenoon. The Mahomedan addressed his Deity *facing the setting sun*, so his procession should pass in the afternoon.

The crowd admired Mr. Harvey's wisdom. The rioters left as peaceful citizens. This made Mr. Harvey's reputation. He was transferred to the Foreign Department. It did not take him long to become a general favourite. When he saw a Raja he studied his countenance even more than the words he spoke.

The Rajas felt confidence in him, and showed him great regard. They nicknamed him "His Highness"—the title of the Rajas—for his initials were "H. H."



CHAPTER XIII

COLONEL IRONSIDE AND BABU SIRCAR

TARA had accepted an invitation from Colonel Greville to breakfast with the officers of the Golconda Hussars on the morning following the Raja's fête. Mohan Lal was going early too to Allahabad to visit his great friend Mr. Sircar, so they arranged to drive over together, and that Tara should make Mr. Sircar's acquaintance and lunch with him before returning to Hindupore.

Mohan Lal's friend was a Bengali named Radha Nath Sircar, with whom he had for years spent his evenings and holidays, Mohan Lal being a widower and a lonely man. Even his worst enemies admitted that Sircar was the best company in the world. He came of an old Bengali family whose native place was about nine miles from Calcutta. His father was in the British service, and was head-assistant (non-combatant) to Colonel Gilchrist when that officer opposed the rebel forces of Kumar Singh near Patna during the Indian Mutiny. In his earliest infancy Sircar lost his mother, and therefore saw

a good deal of his father, who was to him as both parents. Being lonely in his youth, young Radha Nath had to take refuge in books. Gradually he became a bookworm, so much so that he neglected his profession. He was a "double-barrelled gun," for he practised as an advocate and at the same time edited the *Oriental News*, an English newspaper that was the mouthpiece of His Highness the Nabob Rustam Jang of Karimabad for about a quarter of a century. Sircar was well-read and full of humour. He was as fluent in English as he was in Persian and Hindustani, which he knew as well as his mother-tongue—Bengali. He always said: "Let me talk to my worst enemy for half an hour, and I will send him back as my best friend." And he always did. The marvellous success of a much-abused Bengali Babu in a Mahomedan State was a mystery to most people. Distinguished members of the Indian Diplomatic Service were puzzled. In Sircar's case it was not the influence of his wife, for to this day he is a bachelor. The pick of the Indian Civil Service were sent to Karimabad as Political Agents. They all discovered the Babu's finger in every political pie in that Mahomedan State, and often wondered how a Hindu could be the mouthpiece of the proud Musalman aristocracy of Karimabad.

In a sense, Sircar led a retired life. He was never seen on the railway platforms when proud

officials of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy were in glorious transit. Though, as editor of the only paper in that State, Sircar received invitations from the manager of the local theatre, he seldom occupied his reserved box. If he ever was seen there, it was with his intimate friend Mohan Lal, and not with a lady. Nevertheless, Sircar was quite aware that ladies' influence really governs the world. In his youth he was fond of kushti, the Indian ju-jitsu (wrestling), which gave him a slight waist and a graceful appearance, quite an uncommon thing among Bengali Babus. His complexion was not dark for "dusky India," and his features, though not of classic precision, were certainly aristocratic.

He started life without influence as an obscure journalist and a briefless advocate. But he had not long to wait. Within a year he was in a position to refuse cases. If there was a Mahomedan pedigree in dispute, Sircar was the man to consult; if there was a Hindu State in abeyance, he alone could give practical advice. The cream of the next ten years' litigation was safe in his escritoire. As a journalist, also, he was a man not to be despised. He managed to figure as an accused in one of the most sensational libel cases ever fought in India. His honourable acquittal secured for him an exceedingly lucrative advertisement as an editor who never gave out a journalistic secret. This made his fortune. If a corrupt official had to be exposed, there was

Sircar; if a prig of the Diplomatic Service had to be pulled down a few pegs, the columns of the *Oriental News* were useful. His tactics were seldom unsuccessful, for while his writing was satirical, the ridicule always fell upon the right object. His command of words astonished his friends and perplexed his opponents. A single paragraph in the *Oriental News* often gave rise to mysterious expectations in the minds of all interested in the good government of Karimabad. Revelations of un-English manœuvres often brought down the wrath of the political prigs upon Sircar's head. There were sometimes "scenes" at Government House. The civilian political official believes in prudence being the better part of valour—not so the Colonel, who happens to be pitchforked into the Diplomatic Service through petticoat influence.

Once Colonel Ironside, the Political Agent at Karimabad, sent for the Bengali editor.

"Is that your national costume?" thundered the political officer, incensed, when Sircar appeared before him in a frock-coat.

"This is my usual dress," answered Sircar, with a naughty twinkle in his eye. The mighty political rubbed his hands in despair, and said:

"Does your *Oriental News* pay?"

"It does not," replied Sircar quietly.

The Colonel now looked triumphant. He had got hold of the wily Bengali at last. "May I ask why you issue it if it does not pay?" was

the undiplomatic question of the distinguished member of the Diplomatic Service.

"I issue the paper just as British officers run racehorses. It is a hobby, a luxury that I can easily afford," was the polite answer, with a scornful look.

"Good-morning, sir," said the Colonel.

"Good-morning," said the Babu, as he jumped into his rubber-tyred victoria, leaving the Colonel in a rage.

He d——d Sircar and the Bengali race as he lighted his pipe.

Colonel Ironside sent for his assistant, Mr. Harvey, a man of letters, a distinguished linguist, who was every inch a gentleman.

The Colonel asked his advice how to suppress the Babu.

Though both belonged to the same Legation, between Colonel Ironside and Mr. Harvey there was an innate inability of mutual comprehension. Mr. Harvey had a regard for Hindus. He admired their literature, their philosophy, and their domestic virtues. He did not believe in the rule of the bayonet. He was a Christian, and preferred moral influence to physical force. Colonel Ironside, on the other hand, never wasted his time on books. He was fond of pig-sticking; his robust frame and ruddy complexion showed that he was incapable of deep thought. He was a splendid specimen of "animal man."

Finding no encouragement from Mr. Harvey,

he said: "Is there really nothing in our 'S.B.' against the Babu?"

"Absolutely nothing against him," answered his assistant firmly. "On the contrary, one cannot help remarking the honourable expression upon Sircar's intelligent face."

The suavity of Sircar's manners had appealed to Mr. Harvey. There was nothing about him to detract from the favourable impression which his literary versatility made on everyone who met him.

Colonel Ironside paused for a moment, and threw a glance at Mr. Harvey. He immediately withdrew it, but their eyes had met. The Colonel was convinced that Mr. Harvey was not willing to lend himself to crush the innocent Hindu; he saw Mr. Harvey's lips quivering with indignation.

"So you have a good opinion of Sircar?" asked Colonel Ironside.

"Very good indeed," said Mr. Harvey. "He is the most loyal Hindu I know."

Colonel Ironside did not like it at all. He hated Sircar because the latter did not waste his time in running after him, and refused to join the nonentities who flitted about him.

Colonel Ironside was incapable of appreciating the rare gifts and cultivation of a learned Hindu; these were incomprehensible to him.

Colonel Ironside had hardly a definite policy. His idea was to see that every Englishman in

India was respected, but the result of his actions was that, instead of the English name being respected, it was cordially disliked. In his zeal for something to do Colonel Ironside closed an old public thoroughfare by the side of the Legation. The result was a great deal of inconvenience to the public for several years, but he was reckless of consequences—the public had no voice; he could exert his power of annoying people with impunity. His ways estranged many a loyal British subject and conciliated none, yet an appreciative Government made him a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire, and found for him a snug sinecure at Aldershot when he returned home.

As Tara was returning to Hindupore with Mohan Lal he expressed his pleasure at meeting Mr. Sircar, and asked how it was that Colonel Ironside was unfriendly to a person of so much influence at the Court of a Royal Prince.

"For one thing, Sircar did not choose to attend the railway platforms regularly whenever the Political Agent happened to travel, and make a respectful salaam. Then he could not be induced to coax the Nabob's officials to send two carriages and four pairs of horses to Naini Tal, the Colonel's favourite hill-station, when he went there to escape from the heat of the Indian plains."

"But why intrigue for such articles of luxury?" said Tara, puzzled.

"The paternal Government of India have strict rules against their officials fleecing Indian Princes. Openly Colonel Ironside dared not ask for such luxuries for himself, so that he had to intrigue with the Nabob's people to get carriages, without the official knowledge of the Calcutta authorities. Anyone who made himself useful in this direction became a favourite. His reward might be the title of 'Nabob' or 'Rai Bahadur,' a recommendation for membership in the Council. These are the men known in India as the Ap-ke-waste (for your sake, I will say ditto to you). Nothing pleases an Anglo-Indian despot better than Jo Hukm (whatever you order I shall obey) from the native of the country."

Lord Tara wondered why such things were not within the scope of Royal Commissions. He had carefully read volumes of reports of various Royal Commissions and Blue-Books marked "Affairs of East India," but he learnt more in one afternoon from Mohan Lal than he had ever done from the official publications. He asked why no complaints were made.

"The official routine in India is that complaints must be submitted through the official against whom you complain," said Mohan Lal. "Such a system is well calculated to develop arrogance among officials and a state of panic among the people. Fortunately, all Anglo-Indian officials are not like Colonel Ironside. There are good men among them, otherwise the

present unrest would have appeared in an even more dangerous form. Unless Royal Commissions can check the vagaries of the Ironsides that disgrace the name of Englishmen in the East, Britain will fail to keep a moral hold on India."

CHAPTER XIV

CHATEAUBRIAND'S ORIGINAL—PRINCESS KAMALA

CELITIA met Tara just before dinner, and showed him the beautiful present Kamala had given her.

He opened the case at once, and gazed long and earnestly upon the photographs. He changed colour visibly when he first saw that of Kamala: it recalled to him so vividly the dream picture of his life—that ideal face of pure virgin innocence and spiritual charm that he had hardly expected ever to meet in a living form. Then he thought of the reflection of that sweet face he had seen in the magic mirror of the crystal cup filled for him by the beautiful little hand he longed to touch. In the picture Kamala was standing in a natural pose, arranging some roses in a vase, the sari which Tara had always admired falling with careless but exquisite grace over her beautifully-formed neck and shoulders. The soft intellectual expression of her large eloquent eyes and her tender mouth, full of sensitive refinement, appealed to the warmest

feelings of his nature. To her alone he could give his heart once and for ever.

Celitia spoke first. "I am sorry I showed you Rani Kamala's picture, Lord Tara. You must not lose your heart to that sweet girl. I am not surprised that you admire her—she is so perfectly graceful and charming."

"I must tell you, Miss Scott. She has the spiritual beauty I never met before, except in an artist's dream. I, too, could almost wish I had not seen this. And yet I should like to keep it for a day or two if I may, Miss Scott. Perhaps I may never see the dear original."

"The mischief is done, so I will lend it to you for a day or two with pleasure, Lord Tara."

"Thanks. I am glad you are going to stay another fortnight here, and that we may go on all together to Cuttack."

"I believe it is arranged. I shall be very sorry indeed to leave dear Hindupore," said Celitia, as Lord Tara gave her his arm to take her in to dinner.

In the evening young Prince Kishen Singh invited Tara and Mohan Lal to a cool chabutra, a raised pavement, washed with water that made the marble floor shine like crystal in the brilliant moonlight. They were to meet Prince Ranbir Singh, who had been defeated by Lord Tara at the shooting-match.

Kishen Singh brought pan—the fragrant betel leaf made into a tiny bouquet containing spices

—on a gold tray to Ranbir Singh. He then called his favourite attendant Poltu to stand behind Lord Tara and fan him with a huge palmetto leaf in a silver handle. Poltu was the Raja's chief mahout (elephant driver). His elephant Sultan came as a dowry with Ram Singh's mother. Poltu came with the elephant to Hindupore. He was a man of genial disposition; no one had ever seen him sad. He was now about fifty years of age.

Prince Ranbir Singh, who had been dining with Raja Ram Singh, told Tara that Poltu was a great favourite of Kishen Singh's. The boy was fond of sport, and Poltu was very useful to him in the pursuit of this. Poltu had not much work to do. On state occasions he had to drive Sultan, when the Raja specially wanted him for that purpose. He had most of his time to himself, and, like a sagacious Hindu, employed it in getting round the future ruler of Hindupore. He often told Kishen Singh how, when a young man, he had, with eleven others, clubbed a tiger to death. Poltu was a Jat by caste. Like the "Reddy" of the Deccan, the Jat enjoys a great reputation as a tiger-killer. Poltu was a devil-may-care sort of fellow. He had a supreme contempt for anything unsportsmanlike. He was just the man young Kishen Singh wanted, a sort of Sancho Panza on all occasions. Young Kishen Singh would sit on his charpai (a canvas cot) for hours and hear how Poltu had "given

beans" to the "mota Colonel"—the fat Colonel, as they called Colonel Ironside. Poltu took out the Raja's big elephant Sultan for exercise. Sultan obeyed no one but Poltu. They were of the same age, and had been friends from childhood. Sultan always recognized the voice of Poltu.

Colonel Ironside was anxious to ride the largest elephant in India. He arranged with a brother officer who had a Kodak to be ready to photograph him on the elephant, and to send the picture to the *Graphic* at home.

He wrote to Ram Singh:

"MY DEAR RAJA,

"Will you send Sultan, well caparisoned, this afternoon? I want to take a photograph.

"Yours sincerely,

"MICHAEL IRONSIDE."

In the afternoon Poltu took Sultan to Colonel Ironside's bungalow. The Colonel was dressed in the uniform of the Political Department. Lieutenant D'Arcy was ready with his camera.

Colonel Ironside ordered the mahout to make the elephant sit down.

"Why, sir?" asked Poltu, most respectfully.

This enraged Colonel Ironside. Fancy a nigger asking a British officer questions!

He shouted in Hindustani: "Hathi baithna mangta" (I *want* the elephant to sit down).

Poltu adjusted his turban, and quietly told Colonel Ironside that without a special order from the dowager Rani—the mother of Ram Singh—he could not let anyone ride Sultan. Sultan was rajbhog, or reserved for the use of royalty. Poltu had conducted the Czarevitch, now Nicholas II., on Sultan. A Royal Duke was once out on a tiger-hunt on Sultan, when His Royal Highness presented Poltu with a gold watch, of which he was very proud.

In India caste is everything. A high-caste elephant (fil-i-shahi) would not carry anyone who was not of royal descent. This was news to the officers. They had met plenty of "natives," but had never heard of anything of that sort. They forgot that the "natives" they had encouraged were those who misled them by telling them, not the truth, but what pleased Anglo-Indian ears.

Lieutenant D'Arcy asked Ironside whether he should photograph the elephant without him. This irritated Ironside the more. He told the driver to take the elephant away. Poltu made a profound salaam, and said: "Sultan, ghar ko" (Sultan, we go home). The noble beast understood him, and went his way homeward in majestic style. Little Kishen Singh enjoyed that story. His Rajput blood made him feel proud of such a loyal servant as Poltu.

When Colonel Ironside went tiger-shooting Poltu managed to smuggle himself among the camp-followers to see the fun, as he called it.

It was no sport from his point of view. Kishen was in raptures when Poltu told him how Colonel Ironside made his name as the Nimrod of India.

Shooting one tiger was a good day's sport, but Colonel Ironside wanted to make a record bag. "Eleven tigers shot in an afternoon" was the heading he longed to see in the *Junglepore Times*—the editor was his wife's brother! This was his *modus operandi*. Half a dozen officers clubbed together and collected fifty rupees. They asked the District Magistrate of Humbugpore to send them a Tahsildar—an Indian village officer. The Tahsildar got hold of 200 villagers, all the rag, tag and bob-tail of Humbugpore. He got from Nathu Mall, the banya (grocer), fifty empty kerosene tins and fifty twigs of the babul-tree. A sheep from the village farm was requisitioned, and tied to a tree in the neighbouring jungle in the evening. The next morning news came that the sheep was dead and the hind-leg was missing. Now, that was, in Anglo-Indian parlance, a "kill" which made Ironside's mouth water. It meant that there was not only a tiger in the neighbourhood, but that the tiger was bound to come the next evening to finish his dinner. In the meantime, it was the business of Sharfuddin Tahsildar to get villagers to keep away jackals from eating the "kill."

Sharfuddin Tahsildar was more powerful in the village of Humbugpore than the Czar of all the Russias in St. Petersburg. Sharfuddin op-

pressed the peasantry and cringed to the military —there lay the secret of his success. He had not been transferred for fourteen years, because he had a bundle of letters from military officers to say "it would be difficult to replace Sharfuddin."

Of course, the replacing difficulty referred only to the service he rendered to the sportsmen, not to his ability as a revenue officer. More villagers were sent to watch the "kill" than there were jackals in that jungle. Sharfuddin knew "sport," as understood by the average Anglo-Indian officer. He selected two tall trees, which had not a single branch for the first forty feet. He erected a strong scaffolding to seat twenty people, leaving room for an extra servant to help the thirsty sportsmen with an occasional glass of whisky-and-soda. There was an awning made of a large satranji, a cotton carpet made at Agra. This protected the sportsmen from the scorching rays of the Indian sun. The bamboo scaffolding was known as the machan. It was fixed with strong ropes to the trees forty feet above the ground. The sportsmen, sometimes accompanied by a daring sportswoman, had a ladder to climb to this machan. Once they were there with their rifles, Kodaks, and refreshments, the ladder was removed.

The two hundred villagers previously collected there made an infernal noise by beating horrible drums and the empty kerosene tins—a noise that

would drive even a demon mad, much more tigers already worn out by the terrific heat in the plains. The plan succeeded; a tiger was driven out. On all sides there was beating of drums and lighting of bonfires. The only way open to the tiger was within range of the twenty rifles forming the party of Colonel Ironside. The tiger had to pass that fatal zone. Twenty rifles opened fire; one hit the left foreleg of the tiger. Why did the brute not present a bold front? But a tiger, though a native of India, is not so obliging.

The tiger ran away with a bleeding leg. It was now the business of Sharfuddin to see that "Master Stripes" did not disappear. It might mean the loss of his appointment. For an emergency like that he always kept a couple of retired Sepoys of the Native Army ready to give the *coup de grâce.*

Bang went a bullet from the rifle of Ghulam Ghouse, late of the 79th Pathans. A tremendous roar from the dying tiger was the result. Sharfuddin exclaimed, "Ya Allah!" with much relief. His bread was safe for another year, till the next tiger season, which is in the hot weather. Colonel Ironside called for the long ladder. The sportsmen all came down. In a few minutes eighteen sturdy villagers carried the dead tiger tied to two strong bamboos.

Ironside was rather anxious. Whose bullet was it? They examined the wound on the left

leg, but the bullet was not there. It had passed through, so it could not be decided who drew first blood.

The next morning the *Junglepore Times* had a "special telegram" from "our sporting correspondent":

"At 4.45 this afternoon Colonel Ironside shot a man-eater, who has been a terror to the poor villagers for some time past. He used a Lee-Mitford, and, at considerable personal risk, shot the tiger within forty feet of him."

The tiger was *not* a man-eater, the rifle that *killed* the tiger was not Colonel Ironside's. There was no personal risk, because, though within forty feet of the tiger, he was forty feet in the air, beyond the reach of any tiger. Such is the accuracy of newspaper reports, but that is another matter. Such newspaper reports have created a reputation for Colonel Ironside as a "crack shot" in India.

Ranbir Singh indulged in a hearty laugh over the story, as did Lord Tara. Ranbir said that, as Tara was not leaving Hindupore for a few days, he would be happy to "try the jungle" with him. He was anxious to prove to Kamala that he was a better sportsman than Lord Tara.

CHAPTER XV

THE BHAIRAVA TEMPLE

Lord Tara accepted the invitation of Prince Ranbir Singh. Ranbir wanted to show that he was true to his name, which in the language of the Hindu means "Hero in a fight." A tiger-hunt gives more opportunities of showing real sportsmanlike qualities than a tame target-shoot free of all danger. Ranbir had a supreme contempt for machan tiger-shooting, which he had held up to ridicule when he gave Tara an account of Colonel Ironside's sport.

Like most young men, Ranbir was keen on making records. His one thought just now was Rani Kamala. To rise in her estimation he would have entered a lions' den unarmed, if necessary. Though a young man, he had already shot a dozen tigers—eight from elephants and four on foot—feats which were very much talked about among Hindu maidens. Ranbir was the "lion" of the boudoirs in Hindupore, although, according to the custom of the country, he had no access to them.

Within fifty miles of Hindupore was the famous temple of Bhairon — a corruption of Bhairava, the great god of the Hindus. The temple was cut out from a rock, and was an imitation of the famous Kailas cave at Ellora. While the Ellora caves did not escape the iconoclastic fury of the great Mogul Aurungzebe, the Bhairon temple has never been defiled by the touch of the Moslem soldiery. The temple stood in the midst of a thick forest quite twenty miles in area. There were no roads of any sort. Pilgrims found their way through ravines. The forest was infested with tigers, which prevented the Pathans from desecrating the place.

Under the British Government the Pujari—head priest—was allowed to hold the whole forest for the maintenance of Bhairon. It had been made over to the priests by Mr. Harvey, senior, just after the Indian Mutiny, for valuable services rendered by the then Pujari, Ganesh Pandit, who was known to the British officers as "Chobay Maharaj," or "the learned expounder of the four Vedas," which represent Hindu scripture. The name Harvey was therefore a household word among thousands who worshipped Bhairon. It was introduced in nursery songs, in village ballads, even in Hindu idiom. They called an uncouth pilgrim "Runsid"—Ironside; they received a well-bred pilgrim as "Harwi"—a familiar transformation of Harvey.

English sportsmen have been in every nook

and corner of India with their rifles, but never in the Bhairon Forest. Tigers have saved the temple from Moslem desecration. Gratitude prevented the Hindus from abetting the destruction of the faithful ally. The priests argued: "The tiger is a bad animal, but what have we to do with his nature if he has been good to *us?*" Tigers have been for centuries their protection against Moslem invasion of the temple; they are not going to give up the tiger to-day simply because there is no fanatic Moslem crusade in India now. It was the same feeling that prompted many a Hindu to save English lives in the dark days of the Indian Mutiny. Intense gratitude is a strong point in the Hindu.

There has, somehow or other, been no breach in the alliance between Bhairon and "Master Stripes." No priest of the temple was ever killed by a tiger—not even a milch-cow that nourished the Pujari's baby was ever consumed for supper by "Master Stripes." There was an unbroken record of this fact for centuries. To the Hindu mind it could not have been an accident. Often an accident occurred which confirmed the Hindu's belief in the power of Bhairon over tigers. It is a Hindu custom to offer bulls to the gods. Bulls so offered are from the Hindu point of view exempt from all ordinary civic functions. The enterprising missionary includes it as a superstition; the learned Hindu defends it on economic grounds. India is an agricultural country. All

the ploughing is done by bulls, no horses being employed. To preserve the breed, the sacred bull is an institution like stud horses in this country. Everything useful is "sacred" in India The priests had no time to argue with all comers, so they labelled things "sacred," which simply means, "Don't question, but follow an institution that has stood the test of ages."

The Municipal Council of Allahabad wanted strong bulls for their watering-carts. They took possession of one of the sacred bulls of Bhairon. They bought another of the same size at one of the auction sales of the Commissariat Department, to make a pair to drag a heavy water-cart. The sacred bull was unused to such prosaic work. The Musalman driver twisted the bull's tail as the cart passed under a railway bridge. The engine shrieked—Bhairon's bull made a wild rush for liberty. He was tied to the commissariat bull by a strong chain. The result was that the domestic bull was dragged fifteen miles with the sacred bull till they reached the borders of the Bhairon Forest. Passers-by picked up driver Rajab Ali profusely bleeding. No one knew what had become of the bulls. They were safe beyond the municipal limits of Allahabad. At the next meeting of the city fathers there was a hot discussion. One member suggested putting an advertisement in the vernacular paper *Hindu Punch* for the lost animals. Another member who had an interest in the *Moslem Tit-bits* vehe-

mently opposed the suggestion on the ground that the Moslem paper was loyal. Mr. Goodman, the chairman, gave his casting-vote in favour of *Moslem Tit-bits*, because in these days of Hindu unrest he was not going to give two shillings to the seditious Hindu press. Such an addition to the exchequer of the seditious manager might be prejudicial to Imperial interests. That evening he was admired at his club for political sagacity. As the bulls had gone for protection to the Hindu temple where the *Moslem Tit-bits* never entered, the animals were never traced. But that surely did not affect the loyal spirit that had actuated Mr. Goodman.

The sacred bull knew his way to the Bhairon temple. But there was this difficulty now. A single bull may make his way through any thicket, but two yoked together found some difficulties in narrow passages. For three days they got on well. On the morning of the fourth day the Pujari heard the sacred bull bellowing below the rock on which stood the temple. He was delighted that his favourite had come back. He knew nothing of his temporary appointment under the Government of the United Provinces.

In the evening, when the bull did not come to the temple for the priest's pancake, he sent one of the pilgrims to see what was the matter. This pilgrim was a graduate of the Calcutta University. He had been brought up in a mis-

sionary college, and had no "superstition" in him.

He had often laughed at his mother when she had told him of the "tiger-god Bhairon." He had accompanied his mother to the shrine against his will, because his friends would laugh at the great "reformer" visiting a Hindu temple.

At the Pujari's bidding he went in the direction he was told. Lo and behold! there was Bhimsen, the mighty tiger, eating a bull, and another bull standing quietly by the side. The pilgrim was quite unnerved. He ran to the temple and told everything to the priest. The Pujari was not excited. He took his conch shell and blew it. Then he called some half-dozen attendants of the temple and the young "reformer." They all went below the rock. The tiger had gone away after eating the commissariat bull. The sacred bull had not a single scratch. They removed the chain and released him. The sceptic graduate did not know what to say. He returned to Allahabad as an apostle of Bhairon, for had he not seen the miracle with his own eyes—the tiger eating the commissariat bull and not the sacred bull, though they were yoked together?

Now a word about Bhimsen, the big tiger of the Bhairon Forest. Tigers may be roughly divided into two classes. First, those that habitually prey upon cattle and game; secondly, those that have a partiality for human flesh.

These latter are called man-eaters. Bhimsen enjoyed the reputation of being a cattle-eater, but he did not object to an occasional postal runner as a change of diet. He was young and strong, and enjoyed a good square meal of a bull more than a toothsome morsel of a postal runner. He had the reputation of not allowing other tigers to enter the immediate precincts of the temple. He had been known for over ten years to the temple authorities, but there was not a black mark against him—he had killed neither a priest nor a pilgrim. Neither did he touch any cattle belonging to the priest or the pilgrim. So Bhimsen was not only tolerated, but was allowed an occasional goat or sheep by the pilgrims in return for his ancestors' defence of the temple against Mahomedan invasion.

To the British authorities the life of a postal runner with His Majesty's mails is of more value than that of a Hindu priest. They refuse to recognize what a political factor the Brahman is in India. The ordinary reward for killing a tiger is fifty rupees. In the case of Bhimsen the reward was raised to one hundred and fifty rupees, or ten pounds. In that part of the country the native shikaris (hunters) were mostly Hindu, and therefore more or less under the sway of the Pujari. The result was that the name of Bhimsen figured in the "Tiger-Reward Register" as often as the name of Nana Sahib appeared after the Indian Mutiny. Many an

innocent man had to face the gallows because there was "overwhelming evidence" that he was the Nana for whose head there was so handsome a reward. Many a poor tiger who had not the ghost of an idea of the taste of human blood, and to whom the luxury of a postal runner lunch was as much unknown as an oyster and champagne lunch to an East-End dock-labourer, figured as the "man-eater Bhimsen" in the "Tiger-Reward Register." The Postmaster-General at Calcutta did not quite understand the sudden disappearance of other postal runners when he read in the papers that Bhimsen had been killed. The military authorities were worried for twenty years after the Indian Mutiny over Nana Sahib, the Cawnpore rebel.

It is rather difficult to kill a man-eater. His movements are more uncertain than those of a cattle-eater. Besides, his name is dreaded by the villager, who knows his movements, and to whom his exploits and his ferocity have been magnified. The man-eater is generally a tigress—is it because the female race are fond of delicacies? But Bhimsen belonged to the sterner sex. His audacity was marvellous. Once when he was himself the object of hot pursuit by a dozen sportsmen he seized a chaprasi, perhaps mistaking him for a stalwart postal runner, the livery being somewhat similar. Bhimsen was as enterprising as a tigress, and decidedly bolder than one. The Postal Department did not know that

Bhimsen was a gallant. He had once met a postal runner drinking toddy—Indian beer—with a shepherd's daughter, and had left the young woman untouched.

Ranbir Singh had heard a great deal about Master Bhimsen. If he could only bag him, what glory for a tiger-hunter! Here was an opportunity! Mr. Harvey would be on his way from Barrackpore to Simla next week to consult Sir Henry Greene, who had already been summoned there with special reference to the "Bandemataram" of the Bengali Babus being shouted at public meetings in Calcutta. Ranbir sent a message to the Pujari to ask whether he had any objection to Mr. Harvey trying his rifle against Bhimsen. Ranbir knew perfectly well that Harvey was a name to conjure with at the Bhairon temple. Besides, it was just on the borders of the Hindupore State, and so under Ram Singh's influence more or less.

The messenger returned in three days with a message to the effect that the Pujari had no objection to the tiger-shooting party of Mr. Harvey. He would personally receive Mr. Harvey, and even show him the sacred temple itself.

Ranbir told this to Mohan Lal. He at once wired in Raja Ram Singh's name to Mr. Harvey and Mr. and Mrs. Ochterlony.

Now, Allahabad is one of the chief centres of Pan-Hinduism. The name of the "City of

Allah" was given to it by the Moslem Emperor Akbar, but the Hindus still prefer the ancient name of Prayag, and it is still to them consecrated by centuries of worship at its holy shrines and rivers. The annual Kumbh Fair attracts a million of Hindus from all parts of India. For good or evil, the priests of Prayag are factors in the government of India. The Imperial Government may not always recognize this, but as a faithful servant of his country Mr. Harvey never lost sight of facts like these. He wanted to gather up all the threads of Pan-Hinduism to be able to understand the present "Swaraj" (home rule) agitation of the Hindu. Here was a splendid opportunity to meet many influential Hindus in private life. There were Raja Ram Singh and the priest of Bhairon to receive him. If that were not enough the Bengali pulse might be felt through his old friend Sircar. And then there was Mohan Lal, who, as his native attaché, had initiated him into the mysteries of the wire-pulling behind the "S.B."

Mr. Harvey was no sportsman. He was a philosopher and fond of reading, but he accepted the tiger-shooting invitation because he wished to study the Hindu unrest beneath the surface.

He pulled out from his drawer the "Confidential Zero Code," and dashed a long telegram to Simla. He assured his chief that he would return before the fatal day on which the "Ban-

dematarам" flag was to be hoisted at Plassey. He did not tell his plans to Mr. Hunt, whom he ordered to watch movements in Calcutta. Mr. Hunt's watching meant writing bogus diaries.

Mrs. Ochterlony was delighted. They were to start the very next morning for Allahabad.

CHAPTER XVI

LORD TARA AND MR. HARVEY

MR. HARVEY and the Ochterlonys arrived in time for dinner on Tuesday evening. They were received by Mohan Lal and Tara on behalf of the Raja.

The tiger expedition was fixed for the following day.

Mr. Harvey introduced Mr. and Mrs. Ochterlony to Mohan Lal.

"Here is my old friend, Mohan Lal—a crack shot. He will take charge of Mrs. Ochterlony on Friday—the eventful day."

"Why don't *you* come with me, Mr. Harvey?" said Mrs. Ochterlony. She had expected that Lord Tara would have offered to take her under his care.

"I have never handled a rifle in my life," said Harvey, rather annoyed at the young lady's want of tact.

She then turned round to Mohan Lal with a condescending bow, and said: "I must have a tiger."

"I assure you I will do my best," said Mohan Lal, with a sly glance at Harvey.

"When I was at Barrackpore I saw natives netting a huge crocodile. Can't you net a tiger for me to shoot? That would be capital sport," said Mrs. Ochterlony.

"I could not very well do that," said Mohan. "The Rajput idea of sport is so different. The Rajputs say, 'No danger, no sport.'"

Mrs. Ochterlony was angry. When she first saw Mohan Lal she did not like him; now she positively hated him. She made another effort to get hold of Mr. Harvey, but with no result. After dinner she left the gentlemen alone and went with Celitia to pay her respects to the Rani of Ram Singh and Princess Kamala, who had invited her.

Mohan Lal suggested sitting out on the terrace, where there was a cool evening breeze. Mr. Harvey took the opportunity of advising Mr. Ochterlony to consult Mohan Lal about a scheme there was on foot to secure a contract of a large supply of mahwa flowers from the Raja's estate. These were to be used in the distillery about to be established in India as a branch of the famous Robson Company of Glasgow.

The Raja had thousands of mahwa trees—3,000 acres in extent—and Mohan was struck by the idea that the annual sale of the flowers would produce a sum sufficient to enable the Raja to provide tanks for the irrigation of his estate,

which he had long wished to do for the benefit of the rural population. He promised to place the offer before Raja Ram Singh, and to endeavour to induce His Highness to accept it for that reason, adding:

"I must tell you that the Raja has, on principle, a great objection to doing anything towards the encouragement of spirit-drinking among our people. He considers it quite as demoralizing as the opium-eating, which the Government has done so much to suppress."

"Still, the people will want something," said Ochterlony, "so it is as well to give them the best we can." He much approved of whisky himself as a tonic.

"I suppose if you don't get our mahwa you will get somebody else's," said Mohan.

"Of course, I have nothing to do with the business personally," said Mr. Ochterlony. "I will refer you to our agent in India, Mr. Jonathan Toddy, who is now on his way to Calcutta."

Leaving the Laird and Mohan Lal to discuss the mahwa question, Tara invited Harvey to spend an hour with him in his rooms, lounging in comfortable long chairs by the open windows leading to the veranda.

"Mohan Lal tells me that you had something to do officially with Ram Singh at the Delhi Durbar. How do you like him? I am very fond of him; he has been so hospitable and kind to me."

"I know him intimately, and believe him to be the best and most loyal Prince in India. The Rani Kamala, too, is the most perfect little lady I ever met in my life."

"Do you know her? I thought no one was allowed to see a Hindu Princess?"

"That was three or four years ago—she is now more or less behind the purdah, where no profane eye may look upon her sweet face—to me the sweetest I ever beheld."

Tara was startled. Surely Harvey was not in love with Kamala. Tara got up from his chair, and taking Celitia's photographs from a table near, opened the case and showed them to his friend.

"It is a lovely face—just the same beauty of soul in the expression as she had then," said Harvey sadly, adding: "How did you get this, you lucky fellow?"

"It is not mine. Miss Scott lent it to me. But, Herbert, tell me first, do *you* love Kamala?"

"I do in a way—that is to say, I hardly expect to meet any girl half so nice; but, of course, I never dreamt of marrying a Rajput Princess," said Harvey bitterly.

"I have not seen her yet," said Tara, "but I love her with all my heart. She has all the feminine charm that I have dreamt of but have never met with before. I have heard so much of her since I have been here—of her modest, simple life, and kind charity and goodness to all

around her. The Raja's little son Kishen Singh idolizes her, and you know children are shrewd judges of character."

"Dear Tara, you are the one man I should think worthy of her. More impossible things have happened than that you should win her love."

"It's not very easy to make love to a girl you may not see," said Tara sadly.

Harvey assured him that there might be a chance of speaking to her at a Hindu shrine, where the Moslem purdah was powerless. As he was going to Jagannath, he might certainly meet her there.

"I think I must speak to the Raja about it. After all, he might give me a chance. He likes the English far better than they deserve to be liked by the native Princes."

"I consider that Raja Ram Singh has been disgracefully treated by us," said Harvey.

"In what way?" asked Tara.

"I thought that Mohan Lal had already told you that we have actually set detectives to watch his movements."

"You mean that fellow Hunt?" said Tara.

"Yes, that scoundrel. My boss, Colonel Ironside, hated Ram Singh because he did not send an elephant to Mrs. Ironside when she sent a verbal message through a chaprasi—my Fateh Khan. Since then we have been down on poor Ram Singh—the most loyal of Indian Princes."

"He ignores the incident, I believe; at least, he has never condescended to mention the subject to me."

"Have you met any of the Mahomedan gentry in this country?" asked Harvey.

"Yes, I met Nabob Shamshere Khan at Allahabad. Rather a nice man."

"His father was a great General," said Harvey.

"So I believe," remarked Tara. "His recollections of the Delhi Durbar are not altogether agreeable."

"I should think not," said Harvey. "Those poor devils were trotted up and down the Cashmere Gate in blinding dust rehearsing the elephant procession. The poor fellows were fasting."

"What a shame it was!" said Tara.

"An awful shame," said Harvey. "It created a good deal of bad blood. I remember the mahouts of the Rajas swore at our race for worrying them during the Ramazan Fast. We ourselves create unrest, and then send Royal Commissions to inquire into its causes. There is humour in that."

"The Nabob Shamshere Khan told me that the Royal Commission is not likely to do much, as the members were mostly officials of India who are themselves responsible for the present unrest," said Tara.

"I think so, too. Besides, the proud Rajas would not care to unburden their minds to

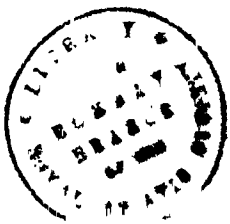
any but our noblemen. They might have appointed one or two men of rank on the Royal Commission."

"That is exactly what the Nabob told me at Allahabad. Ram Singh studiously avoids political discussion with me."

"Because his political memories are very unpleasant," observed Harvey. "You don't know, Tara, that when Ram Singh called on old Ironside, he actually told the Raja that after shaking hands with a Hindu he always had a hot bath."

"The arrogant old rascal!" said Tara, disgusted.

"I have served under Ironside twice. Anyone that did not cringe to him he hated with a virulence not often met with. Latterly there has been a sort of ill-tempered good understanding between him and myself," said Harvey, as he got up to go away. It was twelve o'clock, and he was very tired after his long journey.



CHAPTER XVII

A RAJPUT TIGER-HUNT

RANBIR SINGH'S party consisted of four elephants. Ram Singh and Tara were on the howdah, or hunting-chair, of Sultan (driven by Poltu), and Sukhdeo, the Raja's attendant, stood with his rifle behind the chair, as rear-guard. On another elephant were Ranbir Singh and Mr. Ochterlony on the howdah, two attendants of Ranbir Singh with spears behind them, facing the elephant's tail. On the third elephant was Mrs. Ochterlony, in charge of Mohan Lal, on the howdah. Sarju Prasad, brother of Sukhdeo, stood behind with a Nepaulese kukri knife, with which he had ripped open many a tiger in the Nepaul Terai when Colonel Gilchrist, the Political Agent at Katmandu, was on tour twenty years ago.

Sultan, as we know, belonged to the Dowager Rani of Hindupore. The other two elephants belonged to Ranbir Singh. There was a difficulty in obtaining hunting-elephants, for several Hindu Princesses required their own and their friends' elephants for the pilgrimage to Jagannath.

When Mr. Harvey arrived at Allahabad there was no elephant for him. Neither Mr. Harvey nor Mr. Sircar had ever handled a rifle in their lives. They were only going for the picnic, and would take no part in the excitement of the sport. The actual tiger-hunt would only take one day, though it would take two days to go and two to come back on elephants.

They wanted an elephant for Mr. Harvey. An idea struck Mohan Lal.

"Mr. Harvey, will you ask the Commissariat Officer to send you an elephant? They have a dozen animals doing nothing just now. The elephant will be our guest."

A chaprasi ran with Mr. Harvey's note to the Commissariat Officer, and brought an answer in the affirmative, the elephant to be ready for Mr. Harvey that afternoon. This elephant would carry Mr. Harvey, Mr. Sircar, and two armed Hindu troopers on a double howdah, which accommodates four people.

Poltu suggested taking six dogs from the Raja's kennels. They were Banjara dogs, wild in certain parts of India, between a wolf and a jackal in size, of a deep rusty colour. The Banjara runs by sight as well as by scent. Even a tiger dreads the Banjara dog's power of tearing and lacerating. Their endurance is far greater than that of English hunting-dogs. Besides, having been for centuries neighbours of "Master Stripes," they know his weak points. Woe to

the tiger on whose track half a dozen Banjaras start! Four are sufficient to keep a tiger at bay; with six a sportsman can take the offensive.

Rani Kamala heard of the tiger-shoot. Both Kamala and Prince Kishen Singh had great faith in Poltu, the man in charge of the Shikar elephants. Though Poltu was fifty, he was as alert as a young man of thirty. It was not strength that was wanted. A thorough knowledge of tigers' ways was more useful, and that only a native of the jungle had. Poltu belonged to a tribe that had lived in the jungle for generations. They knew the particular herb the juice of which would cure an ordinary scratch from a tiger. They knew particular plants the smell of which a tiger avoided.

Kamala placed Poltu's right hand between her tiny hands and said: "Poltu Singh, you will look after the Lat Sahib?"—meaning Lord Tara.

"Which Lat?" (Lord) asked Poltu, pretending not to understand.

A Hindu lady never names one she cares for. From her point of view it is profanation. Mr. Herbert Harvey, as a magistrate, was once amused when a Hindu woman refused to tell the name of her husband. There are feminine fancies everywhere. In England you could not easily get a lady to give her age in a court of law. The Indian lady has no objection to giving her age, but she does object to give the name of her lord. Such are national peculiarities.

Somehow Kamala did not like to pronounce the word "Tara," so she said "the English Lord."

"Ah, I see," said Poltu thoughtfully. He was too discreet to say anything more. "Kamala Rani, ham marey tak sher nahin chuta" (Your Highness, no tiger will touch him as long as I am alive).

Kamala looked heavenward, and prayed for Tara's safe return.

It was five o'clock on Wednesday evening when the party, consisting of altogether about a hundred men, left Hindupore. The weather was hot, so they had to march only at night. It was a regular Rajput tiger-hunt. Tara was anxious to see a real Hindu shoot, and hence the arrangements. Bullocks carried provisions, some camp furniture, and a Kabul tent for Mrs. Ochterlony. The men were to bivouac under mango-trees. The elephants marched twenty-five miles in a night. On Friday morning, about five o'clock, they reached Bhairon Talao, a magnificent sheet of water teeming with ducks and other water-fowl. Mrs. Ochterlony wanted to shoot the ducks; Mr. Harvey objected. He knew the ducks were under the protection of the temple.

"But we have been invited to shoot," remarked Mrs. Ochterlony rather petulantly.

"Yes, to shoot tigers, and tigers only," observed Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Ochterlony was sorry that his wife did not quite understand the point. He remarked to her:

"My dear Mabel, when you invite a friend to tea, you don't like him to invite himself to dinner."

The Pujari of the temple was there. When Mohan Lal pointed out Mr. Harvey, the priest blew his conch-shell and put a garland round Mr. Harvey's neck.

"Where are the tigers?" asked Mrs. Ochterlony.

"No tigers inside my turban," answered the old priest in a manner that caused considerable merriment. Everyone laughed heartily, except Mrs. Ochterlony. Seeing Poltu, the Pujari said: "You know more about tigers than a dozen priests like me. You know the ravine to the due west of the temple, not three miles from here. You will get as many tigers as you like there."

They all had a substantial breakfast. The horses and bullocks were left in charge of the priest's attendants. Some of the Raja's people also stayed behind. Sukhdeo bent down and touched with both hands the feet of the Pujari. The Pujari turned the palm of his right hand heavenward and touched the middle joint of his ring-finger with the right thumb. As they entered the jungle it was like Epping Forest in July, everything was so luxuriant.

Mrs. Ochterlony wanted her elephant to walk abreast with Tara's elephant. Mohan said he had no voice in the matter. The Dowager Rani, mother of Ram Singh, had given strict orders that as soon as the party entered the forest everyone, including the Raja, was to be under the guidance of Poltu. If anything happened to Poltu, the whole party were to retire, according to Mohan Lal's instructions.

"I thought women had no voice in India," said Mrs. Ochterlony.

"Ah, that is how poor India has been vilified by travellers who never met a Hindu lady to speak to."

"Can't you take this elephant to the side of my husband's? I wish to speak to him," said she.

"I am sorry, it is impossible. I can smell a tiger; I must keep my rifle ready."

"There is a strong, pungent smell; is it that of a tiger?" asked she, rather alarmed, as Mohan pointed his finger towards a tiger slinking up under cover of some long grass, four feet high, on the other side of the ravine, not forty feet from the elephant.

"Tigers spring on people, don't they?" said Mrs. Ochterlony nervously.

"That is the danger," said Mohan Lal, laughing in his sleeve.

Sultan was leading the elephants. Mrs. Ochterlony's was the third, Mr. Harvey's was the last.

Suddenly they heard what appeared to be the bark of spotted deer. Mrs. Ochterlony was familiar with the bark. She raised her rifle.

Mohan said: "There are no deer here. It is Poltu, who is barking like a deer as a signal to the other elephant-drivers that a tiger is on the left of us, and may board an elephant at any moment. The imitation of the bark of the deer warns the mahouts, and diverts the attention of the tiger."

As they passed they saw a dead cow on the bank, which was almost on a level with the elephants. Mohan pointed out to Mrs. Ochterlony the deep holes on the back of the neck of the cow caused by the tiger's fangs. Blood was flowing from the wounds, which showed that the poor thing had been alive an hour before.

"The tiger must be near, then," said she, in a hoarse voice.

"Yes; that was why Poltu warned the other drivers by his bark," said Mohan.

"The cow's neck is broken," observed Mrs. Ochterlony.

It was now about three in the afternoon. Suddenly there was a "wough" from the bank. It was a tigerish locality. Sarju Prasad from behind gave the alarm. Mohan Lal and Mrs. Ochterlony turned back to see what was the matter. There was a crackle of dry leaves on the bank. There was a cautious but firm tread. Mohan Lal could not mistake the sound; he

knew a tiger was approaching. He put his finger on the trigger ready for an emergency. In a second there was a full-grown tiger before them.

"Ready to spring!" shouted Sarju Prasad from behind.

Like lightning the driver turned the head of the elephant towards the bank to save a flank attack.

It was a tremendous shock for Mrs. Ochterlony. She was sitting to the right of Mohan Lal. The distance between them and the tiger was within twenty feet.

The tiger growled. It was a startling, coughing roar. It almost paralyzed poor Mrs. Ochterlony. Her rifle fell from her hand. She was pale. She looked at Mohan imploringly. Between them and the tiger was the mighty trunk of the elephant whirling in the air against the attack. Suddenly the tiger sprang. Mrs. Ochterlony shut her eyes in terror. The clever mahout moved the elephant in the twinkling of an eye. The tiger alighted on the grass between Mohan's elephant and Harvey's elephant. The latter belonged, as we know, to the Commissariat Department. He was used to carrying tents and baggage, but had never seen a tiger in his life. He backed with a grunt. The tiger had it all to himself for a moment. He had the hindquarters of Mohan's elephant at his mercy, for an elephant cannot kick. Poltu

had grasped the situation at once. The mighty Sultan moved to the relief of Mohan's elephant. Ranbir's elephant was also handy.

Poltu, like a good general, put the three elephants back to back. That commanded all sides with five rifles, Mrs. Ochterlony being quite incapable of action. The tiger was lost in the long grass. The elephants sniffed at him, but the men could not exactly locate him. The sun was very hot, and a strong wind blew clouds of dust into everybody's eyes. The wind shook the long grass in waves, which gave "Master Stripes" the opportunity to move about without being detected.

Suddenly there was a roar. Some thought it was the tiger; others believed it was one of the elephants. Ram Singh felt very anxious about Harvey and Sircar. They were in an awful position. Their elephant was in a fright, and would not obey the driver. Neither Harvey nor Sircar had firearms. Two armed troopers could not defend them against a tiger when the elephant would not help in the defence. Mr. Harvey's elephant was about fifty feet from the others, and refused to budge in any way.

Neither Harvey nor Sircar looked in the least disturbed. They were both cool-headed men, perhaps fatalists, owing to excessive devotion to Hindu philosophy. Suddenly a peahen rose with a startling clamour. That was signal enough to Poltu. Back to back, like a fortress,

moved the three elephants to the spot from whence flew the peahen. Poltu was right. There was the tiger—he did not wish to be trampled under elephants' feet. He roared in his fury. Mrs. Ochterlony fainted.

Poor Mohan did not know what to do. She might roll off the elephant. He pulled off his turban and tied her with it carefully to the howdah, placing her head on his thigh. It was all done in a minute. He again got his rifle ready to hand.

There was no time to think. The tiger made a rush for Mohan's elephant. It was a terrible predicament. With an unconscious woman resting on his knees, he could not move to take a proper aim. He fired—the bullet grazed the tiger's left fore-leg. In another minute the tiger would have been upon him but for the wonderful dexterity of Poltu. Before the tiger could jump Sultan had lashed his hindquarters with his mighty trunk. That changed the tiger's plans —he faced Sultan for revenge.

From their elephant Harvey and Sircar could watch the attack very well. The mighty Sultan was waving his trunk in frantic rage, which prevented Tara from shooting, lest he should hit Sultan's trunk instead of the tiger. "Bus, bus!" shouted Poltu. It acted like magic. Sultan stopped waving his trunk for a second. Lord Tara put a ball between the eyes of the tiger.

With a terrific roar the tiger jumped a few feet, and fell down, stone-dead.

"Hurrah for Tara!" shouted Harvey. They all cheered Tara.

They wanted to help poor Mrs. Ochterlony, but Poltu said it was a tigerish locality; they must go back a mile before the lady could be taken from the elephant.

On the way back Mr. Harvey's recreant elephant led the party. In an hour they reached the cool bank of the tank. They all got down and carried Mrs. Ochterlony in their arms to the hammock lent by the priest.

"Don't be alarmed," said the Pujari. "I will restore the lady to consciousness." He put a few drops of milky fluid into her mouth. She opened her eyes. He gave her some more to drink in a cocoa-nut shell, which completely restored her to life.

"What is it?" said Mr. Ochterlony gratefully.

"Only Bhairon's prasad, milk that has been blessed by the god of the temple."

Poltu was very angry with the Commissariat elephant. He suggested that the elephant should be sent to fetch the dead tiger as a punishment for his cowardice. This met with general approval.

They stayed that night on the banks of the lake. Harvey could not visit the temple, as he could not leave Mr. and Mrs. Ochterlony. They had their dinner in beautiful moonlight, with a cool breeze.

Poltu and the other attendants each offered a cocoa-nut to Bhairon as a thank-offering. Poltu galloped back to Hindupore to inform the ladies of the success of the expedition. There was a relay of six horses to do only fifty miles. At eleven o'clock at night Kamala was delighted to hear that Tara shot the tiger. She was in ecstasies when she was told that Ranbir did not fire a shot. The account of the lady tiger-huntress amused Celitia and everybody.

The party returned to Hindupore on Monday morning.

A few hours later Mr. Harvey left for Simla.

Mrs. Ochterlony was quite subdued by her first experience of a tiger-hunt, and said that she was sure she should never be well in India. So the Laird agreed to take her home to Kildrum in time for grouse-shooting.

They left for Calcutta the same day.

Mr. Sircar was invited to stay at Hindupore a few days longer.

CHAPTER XVIII

TARA IN LOVE WITH KAMALA

AFTER a refreshing bath and two or three hours' rest, Tara was surprised, at about twelve o'clock, by a visit from the little Raja, who came to congratulate him upon his first tiger. He had heard from the faithful Poltu all the particulars of the expedition.

Kishen Singh brought a beautiful garland of roses with him, which the Dowager Rani had given him to throw round Tara's neck. It was the Hindu Jai Mala (the garland of victory). She was particularly glad Sultan had again distinguished himself and that Lord Tara had proved worthy of the honour of being carried by him. Kishen was in high spirits, and, looking proudly at Tara, said:

"I am glad *you* shot the tiger. He is a beauty. They brought his skin home, and Poltu says it ought to belong to Kamala. *I* say it's yours."

"I should say it belonged to the Dowager Rani," said Tara diplomatically. "Sultan behaved so splendidly. I should like to go and

see how he is, after all his fatigue. Will you take me to his stable ?"

"I often go there. He knows me very well. Now and then Poltu gives me a ride on him. How brown you are to-day, Lord Tara ! You are growing like us."

Tara laughed heartily. "I never had a fair complexion ; but you are right—I certainly am well tanned by your Indian sun. I like it."

Kishen looked round the room. He soon spied out Celitia's frame, and exclaimed : "I didn't know you had our photographs. We had them done for Miss Scott."

"Miss Scott kindly lent them to me for a day or two," said Tara, blushing painfully.

"Don't you think Kamala very pretty ?"

"She is beautiful. And how very handsome your mother is, too ! I admire her very much," said Tara, as they went to see Sultan.

Poltu was feeding him with chapati (Hindu bread) and hulwa (a Hindu sweet), which were Sultan's reward after a tiger-hunt. Poltu received Tara with great respect. Had not Rani Kamala recommended him specially to Poltu's care ?

Tara spoke to him kindly in Hindustani, and thanked him for his assistance at the tiger-hunt, presenting him with a hundred rupees in a little English leather bag-purse mounted in silver.

Poltu was delighted with the gracious words even more than with the gift. "The Lat Sahib

is too kind. It reminds me of the Royal Duke of Connaught," said Poltu, pulling out the gold watch he was so fond of.

As Tara and young Kishen were returning to the bungalow they met Raja Ram Singh with Mohan Lal. The Raja gave his hand to Tara with a cordial grasp, as he said:

"Mr. Harvey had to leave very early to catch a train. I could not persuade the Ochterlonys to stay even a day or two longer."

"I had quite enough of Mrs. Ochterlony," said Mohan Lal. "Never will I take charge of a lady at a tiger-hunt again!"

"Poor girl! it was too bad of the Laird to allow her to come. He ought to have known better. She was very unhappy at having lost her complexion on the voyage," said Tara, with a sly glance at Kishen.

Mohan, who was very tired, asked the Raja's permission to rest for a few hours, so Ram Singh sent Kishen to his lessons, and walked on with Tara to a shady grove of orange-trees, where they sat down on the fragrant grass, with its rich undergrowth of creeping vines and ferns.

It was a romantic spot, and suddenly Tara made up his mind to confess his love to the Raja, and learn his fate. He was wearing the Dowager Rani's garland of roses. It gave him courage to speak.

"Your Highness once asked me if I had never been in love. I never was till now."

"What an extraordinary man you are!" said the Raja. "You can't have met any ladies since you came among us. I don't think it can be Miss Scott?"

"She is a very nice woman, but I should not care for her in that way. I have always had an ideal fancy for a kind of spiritual beauty in a girl that is rarely found in this commonplace world of ours. I have never before met with it in a living form, but it has come to me at last."

"Do I know this wonderful being?" asked the Raja, smiling.

"It is no other than your Highness's sweet niece, the Rani Kamala."

The Raja was startled. "What can you know of her? Surely you have not dared to make her acquaintance under my roof?"

"I have hardly seen her sweet face — how could I?" said Tara sadly. "But I have heard of her gentle, loving ways from those who know her well, and a few days ago Miss Scott showed me her photograph, with those of the Rani, your son, and yourself. She is to me the perfection of womanly grace and charm—one to be adored, as we worship our God, in her innocent purity and sweetness. It may be impossible for me to win her. I know you may refuse to think of it; but the happiness of my life is in your hands. I shall never see her like again."

The Raja was deeply touched. He had formed a very high opinion of Tara. He could wish for

no better or nobler husband for his beloved niece.

Tara went on: "She is far above me in rank, I know, but she would be warmly welcomed in England as the first Indian Princess to take her place in the ranks of our nobility, and the first Indian Princess to condescend to come amongst us. My father and mother would love her dearly, but her people would be my people too, and I would not ask her entirely to give up her beautiful country for me."

"Until I knew you, Tara, I should not have believed it possible to entertain for a moment the idea of allowing Kamala to marry an Englishman. You are so unlike most of your countrymen in your sympathy with us, that I will not oppose your wishes, should Kamala herself care for you. My only brother left her to my care before she was a year old, and when she lost her mother, a few years later, I promised that Kamala should be free to choose her own husband under our ancient rite of swayamvara (personal selection). She has not yet used her privilege, and has refused every offer proposed to her. As she knows that the Rani and I are anxious that she should decide this important question, she asked me to let her go to Jagannath this year to pray for help and guidance. As you may have heard, at that sacred shrine we lay aside all earthly distinctions of rank or wealth. No caste exists there, and we meet our fellow-

creatures on equal terms. As you intend to visit the Festival, you may perhaps have an opportunity of speaking to her there."

It was more than Tara had dared to hope for. This was what Harvey, too, had said.

"Your Highness' holds out to me a chance I hardly dared to ask for. I, too, shall pray for the greatest blessing a man can aspire to in this world—a pure and loving wife. 'Her price is far above rubies,' as Solomon says, and he knew women well."

"There is one point in your favour, Lord Tara, though I hardly ought to let you know it. Kamala has a wish to be the only wife when she marries, and this is not the usual custom of our country. Perhaps the Rani and I have set her too good an example of married happiness. That is her great objection to Ranbir Singh, poor fellow!—he already has a wife."

"Then he, at all events, will not be inconsolable," said Tara.

"By-the-by, Ranbir is coming to dinner with me to-night, so we will come in and see you in the evening. You must try to soothe his disappointment at losing the tiger. He is quite our champion shot, so it must be a great mortification to him for you to have had so much better luck."

"Will you thank the Rani Dowager for the honour she did me in sending me a 'garland of victory'?" said Tara. "I shall value it as much

as any victor in the Olympic games valued his crown."

The Raja decided to consult the Rani and his mother upon Tara's proposal.

They both received it very favourably. Kamala had shown great interest in the doings of Lord Tara since he had been at Hindupore, and had asked Mohan Lal, who enjoyed the exceptional privilege of visiting the Zenana, to show her a photograph he had of Tara. Tara seemed a real friend to India. It might be a valuable alliance on both sides.

The Dowager Rani advised Ram Singh to consult the great astrologer, Vishnu Pandit, who was sure to be at Jagannath, and to be guided by his advice. He would be able to cast the horoscope of Tara, and, should the result prove favourable, all India would accept the decree of fate. Who can withstand the mysterious Providence that rules the destinies of mankind?

CHAPTER XIX

A DIPLOMATIC ALLIANCE

THE Raja told Mohan Lal of Tara's offer, and asked his advice.

"I can see nothing but good in it, if your Highness approves of it personally. Lord Tara is a charming man, and a marriage like this would do more than fifty treaties to bring the two races into closer touch with each other. It would be a truly patriotic and diplomatic alliance on both sides."

"Do you think Kamala likely to accept him?" said the Raja.

"The other day she asked me to show her a photograph I have of him, and said he was the handsomest man she had seen—he looked so good."

"It was a great deal for Kamala to say. Well, she must decide for herself. I certainly like Tara, and I have seen much of him during the last month. It's a most romantic affair altogether." Mohan thought of the Bairagi's prophecy, and of Jamuna Bai.

He told his friend Sircar about it.

"It's the best news I've heard for a long time," said Sircar. "I have not seen Rani Kamala since she was a child, but she always was the sweetest little rose-scented lady in the world. Poor Harvey quite lost his heart to her some time ago. He used to rave about her at Delhi."

"But there will be a difficulty," said Mohan. "No Hindu priest will sanction the marriage between people of different religions."

"I don't know about that. There is no caste at Jagannath. The Raja of the place is the sweeper of the temple—you forget," said Sircar.

"Do you really think we can get over that difficulty?" asked Mohan anxiously.

"I think so, Guruji."

Sircar addressed Mohan as Guruji. It literally means "spiritual guide," but the word is often used by a Hindu in the sense that "gov'nor" is used by people in this country.

"I know that you are a wonderful fellow for carrying things through," said Mohan, in a thoughtful mood.

"Very good of you to say so. Here is my plan: You get the Raja to ask me to meet you at Cuttack. Though in these days you can go by train all the way to Jagannath, the Raja's party will have to go on elephants from Cuttack. A railway carriage is plebeian, after all—it never appeals to the Oriental imagination. That's why Curzon got up a grand elephant procession at the

Delhi Durbar. Between Cuttack and Jagannath we shall have four clear days to get round the people as we proceed. Do you not remember how I persuaded Kadir Mian, the Sheikh of the mosque at Karimabad, to co-operate with Mr. Harvey in segregating plague patients at Karimabad? Don't you recollect the incident? I think, Guruji, that as a Hindu I can easily manage our own priest of Jagannath. You know that old Guru Swami, the chief pilgrim-hunter, suffers from neuralgia. I will take a vibrator with me and give him a few shocks. If he says it does him good I shall present it to him and promise him a better one later on. He is a true Brahman—he will not accept money."

"A capital idea," said Mohan, much relieved.

"Do you think I shall be justified in laying out a couple of lakhs of rupees [£13,000] in buying jewellery, shawls, and other things, to be ready for the wedding?" asked Mohan.

"Of course, but we have not settled about the priest yet."

"I thought your friend Guru Swami would be able to secure the High-Priest," said Mohan.

"So he would. But we ought to have a Christian priest there also, for Lord Tara's sake."

"You are always right, but how shall we get one at such short notice? There is hardly a week before us. Besides, it might be talked of; that would never do."

"Lord Tara met Mr. Long, the missionary,

on his voyage out. Five hundred rupees subscription to the Foundlings' Home will win his heart. Besides, he will witness the great Car Festival under the best auspices. You can lend him one of the Raja's tents. I should like to have Father Browne there, too. He is Long's associate in the Foundlings' Home. They wished to make the Home under 'the Church of Christ,' and not under any sectarian Church. You know the Longs are good people. You may have heard that he is the grand-nephew of the great Long of the indigo-planters' case. There is at Calcutta a Long Sahib ka Girja—Mr. Long's Church. It is a household name with us Bengalis. It used to be the rendezvous of all Hindus oppressed by indigo-planters fifty years ago, when Mr. Long, senior, like a true Christian, fought and suffered for us."

"Do you know Father Browne well?" asked Mohan.

"Rather. You forget I am a St. Xavier's boy. I was educated by Catholic Fathers. I have great faith in them. Here comes little Kishen Singh—the Raja wants you."

"Well, here's a cheque for five hundred rupees, payable to the 'Lady Superior, Foundlings' Home, Patna'—you do the rest."

Mohan left with Kishen Singh. Sircar was to settle everything. Telegrams were flying about between Allahabad, Patna, and Cuttack.

After dinner Tara asked Sircar to sit out with

him for an hour on the terrace facing the avenue.

"I believe you are going to Calcutta to-morrow, Mr. Sircar. I hope to see you there next week. I have been so happy here; it all seems like a dream."

"You look happy, Lord Tara—as if you had won the wish of your heart."

"I hope I don't carry my heart on my sleeve so far as that," said Tara, smiling. "Perhaps you have heard that I have a chance of great happiness before me soon. Do you know the Rani Kamala, Mr. Sircar?"

"I have not seen her for several years, but I knew her well as a child."

"Did Mr. Harvey ever tell you his secret?"

"It was easy to guess it, but he used to tell me much about his trouble at the time. I think it is the reason he has never married."

"Poor fellow! he will never see anyone like her again."

"How few men are fortunate enough to marry the ideal woman they admire!" said Sircar. "Although I have not been so blest, the secret of any success that has come to me is the influence of a lady. To her noble inspiration I owe all that is brightest and best in my life. She was the wife of a leading advocate in Bombay, a woman of wonderful tact and charm, full of wit and originality. In an impulsive moment she had made a mistake in choosing a friend.

This man was unscrupulous, and tried to make a cat's-paw of her husband, who was a brilliant lawyer and well up in his clients' affairs, but, through some fatality, never quite understood his own. At this juncture I came to her help, and was able to render her an important service. She sent me a book with her autograph:

"'To a loyal and staunch friend, from a grateful and faithful one.

"'*Christmas*, 1897.'

"I may trust my housekeeper with my diamond studs and emerald pins, but the book with this autograph is always under my own lock and key. I value it more than anything I possess. From my point of view she was an ideal woman, for she was adored by her children. She was as kind and clever as she was beautiful and fascinating, and encouraged and distinguished me everywhere by her friendly notice. To this day I love and honour her as the most perfect woman I have ever known."

"It is delightful to hear such unqualified praise of a woman from a man of the world like yourself."

The next morning Mr. Sircar left for Patna. There he lunched with Father Browne. Mr. Long was at Benares. Father Browne was delighted to be the Raja's guest at Jagannath. He wanted to send photographs to the Pope; it was a red-letter day in Father Browne's life.

He was very fond of books, but could not afford the luxury of buying them. There was no good library where he lived. The "Home" was eighteen miles from Patna, on the River Ganges. It stood on forty acres of ground presented by a gosain (Hindu priest), to whom the idea had immensely appealed. The success of the "Home" was due to the fact that none of the foundlings were baptized before they were eighteen years old—when they could think for themselves. The large Oriental library at Patna had recently been removed to Calcutta for the Victoria Memorial Hall, so the poor priest did not know what to do with himself after attending to the welfare of the discarded children. The Lady Superior was Sister Gabrielle. She was fond of her own literature, and had no particular aptitude for Hindu theology.

Father Browne had long been anxious to possess a set of Max Müller's "Sacred Books of the East"; he was particularly fond of them. He therefore was delighted to find that his old pupil Sircar had brought with him a complete set of Max Müller's works as a present, in a very handsome mahogany case.

Father Browne promised he would join Lord Tara at Patna on receipt of a telegram.

He would write to Mr. Long at Benares to do the same.

Sircar telegraphed to Mohan Lal, and went on to Calcutta.

Tara asked for an interview with Mohan Lal. He wished to offer through him a gift of 15,000 rupees (£1,000) to the poorer pilgrims during the coming pilgrimage.

"It is a thank-offering for all the kindness I have met with since I have been at Hindupore. I have been saving a little from my income for years to be able to afford a visit to India. I have ten thousand pounds at command to spend in the country if necessary. Perhaps you may be able to tell me of some useful purpose for two thousand pounds in Hindupore. I am more independent than most heirs-apparent, although my father's income is not more than twenty thousand pounds a year. When I came of age, my father, with my mother's consent, settled upon me absolutely the income my mother had inherited from her father—five thousand pounds a year.

"My seat in Parliament costs me nothing, as I was elected without opposition, but of course it involves the expense of staying in London for several months of the year.

"My father holds his place in the other House by his English Earldom of Claremont. Tara is only the second Irish title. He seldom comes to London now. I am comparatively rich for an eldest son, who often gets a very small allowance. My father wished me to be able to marry if I chose, and so trusted me with a fair income when I was very young. I trust the time is not

far off when I can share it with someone I love Do you really think there is hope for me ?"

"I think you are a very lucky man to have any chance at all of winning so charming a wife as our Princess. She is hard to please, but you may find a way to her heart—it is a kind and true one. I have known her nearly all her life. She is younger than my own grand-daughter."

CHAPTER XX

A RAILWAY ROW

It was decided that Ram Singh, the Dowager Rani, the Rani, Rani Kamala, little Kishen Singh, Lord Tara, Celitia, and Mohan Lal should go by train to Calcutta. There they would stay a few days only.

There was nothing particular to be done at Calcutta in the hot season. The officials were all away either at Simla or Darjeeling, the two favourite hill-stations of the Anglo-Indians for the last fifty years.

Several charming ladies who preside at the various social functions in India met their husbands while "fern-hunting" at the Shrubbery or riding round "Jakko."

Darjeeling is well known to Anglo-Indian youths as the only place in their great Oriental Empire which boasts of a public school where boys wear Eton jackets. That is not all. Sons of the members of the heaven-born service, the imperious bureaucracy of Imperial India, actually submit to the discipline of the "fag"

master—nay, go further: they do not object to being flogged! George Dalrymple, son of the Governor of Hajipore, was actually flogged for abusing a native in the street. The Rector of St. Peter's School next day received the following telegram from Sir Richard Dalrymple, father of the boy:

"It is *disgraceful* that my son had to remove his trousers for punishment."

The Rector wired back:

"Splendid result. George very *graceful* and gentlemanly now."

The English boy loves St. Peter's notwithstanding the prospect of occasional flogging. There he dresses as a gentleman—Eton jacket and silk hat, the ambition of the English youth. Occasionally a couple of the young gallants may be seen "mashing" the Bhutia beauties. These "chips of the old blocks" grow up as Anglo-Indian administrators.

The Raja had two saloon carriages of his own, that were always attached to trains when he travelled, unless he ordered a special train, which he seldom did. He preferred spending money upon the improvement of his State rather than in the hollow show of special trains.

One of the Raja's two saloons was sanctified by the priest, who chanted some mantras, burned incense, and sprinkled it with Ganges water. This was for the safe-keeping of holy articles for the pilgrimage. There were shawls

for the priests. The shawls had a fragrant scent of sandal-wood, which was used to keep away moths.

The other saloon carriage was occupied by the Dowager Rani, the Rani, and her son, Rani Kamala, and Celitia.

The Raja wished to reserve a first-class carriage for the men of the party, but the station-master said it was impossible, as the Delhi-Calcutta express has only thirteen carriages, including the engine. There were already eleven carriages in the train, the Raja's two saloons making the total thirteen. It was not clear whether it was a superstition as to the number thirteen or the enervating weather of the East that affected the engines. At Mokameh Junction, however, a "reserve" first-class carriage would be at the disposal of the Raja; therefore they were sure of a night's rest. So the Raja, Tara, and Mohan entered an ordinary first-class carriage. Ram Singh was dressed as a Hindu gentleman, Tara as an English country gentleman. Mohan was simpler than the Prince, with white trousers, a long angarkha (coat), with a muslin turban. But anyone could see at a glance that they were three men born to lead. Their carriage was next to the Rani's saloon.

It was not very hot; there had been a heavy shower the night before. The day was cloudy; there was no glare. They had the carriage to themselves. A couple of hours later railway

porters shouted "Mogul-Serai! Mogul-Serai!" In India it is a custom for porters to shout the names of the railway-stations to warn unwary passengers. Mogul-Serai is the junction for Benares, a sacred Hindu town.

Hawkers came near the carriages with their trays, laden with the lovely brassware, of most artistic design, made at Benares.

Rani Kamala came to the window of her saloon to look at the things, bought some, and presented them to Celitia. Kishen Singh came too, and seeing Tara at the window of the next carriage, exclaimed to Kamala in Hindustani: "Now you can have a good look at Lord Tara. There he is."

Kamala looked up shyly, and met Tara's earnest gaze. He could hardly believe his eyes; it was a delight at last to behold the sweet face, full of grace and charm, that he had dreamt of for so long. Kamala did not seem to mind being looked at by Tara, for she half lifted the gauze sari which she had thrown over her head as a veil, and went on buying a quantity of toys for her little cousin, all the time bargaining with the hawker. He saw the game at once, and put his tray halfway between Tara and Kamala, to give them an excuse for looking at each other while admiring the brassware. Then Tara bought some of the things, too, for little Kishen, stealing an occasional glance at his lovely cousin. The Rani had also come forward, and

smiled graciously upon Tara, who was in ecstasies.

Suddenly someone spoke to him from the platform. It was Mr. Long, who, at Benares, had secured six foundlings for his "Home." He did not only preach what Christ said, but *did* what the Saviour told His followers to do. That was why the natives liked and trusted Mr. Long. While other missionaries were preaching in the bazaars, Mr. Long was tending the sick-beds of the poor Hindus and Mahomedans. Though there was in India some ill-feeling against the English missionaries, and clergymen were being attacked, Mr. Long was welcomed everywhere. The Hindus knew that he cared less about adding names to his list of converts than about winning their hearts by real Christian work. "Example is better than precept," was Mr. Long's motto.

It was too hot for afternoon tea. Sukhdeo brought fruits and glasses of mango-phool prepared by Rani Kamala.

About seven o'clock in the evening the train steamed into Patna. Here it was to stop for a quarter of an hour. Tara, with Ram Singh, got out to walk on the platform. Mohan went to the ladies' carriage to see that the Ranis were comfortable. Mr. Long went to get hold of his six boys from the third-class compartment, and to make them over to the Lady Superior, who had come to see Father Browne off. There was

no one left in the carriage. Lord Tara's servant Bhima stood on the platform watching his master's things and muttering to himself: "Jai Jagannath Ji" (Great is the Lord Jagannath). He had made a vow that, except milk, he would take nothing to eat—his first meal would be the "Maha Prasad" offering to the Lord Jagannath.

An Englishman entered the Raja's carriage. He had a rifle, a fishing-rod, a folding-chair, a couple of boxes, and a packing-case marked "Himalayan Dew." It bore a label:

"JONATHAN TODDY, ESQ.,
"Manager, Himalayan Distillery,
"Chupra."

Two friends came to see Mr. Toddy off. His chaprasi took possession of one of the seats, spread his master's rug and a sheet over it, with a pillow for his head. Toddy lighted his pipe, and, addressing his friends, said: "Yes, if we can manage that chap Ram Singh, what a good thing it will be!"

"I see in this morning's *Pioneer* that Ram Singh is out on pilgrimage. There's a blessed Hindu shrine or something of the sort somewhere between Calcutta and Madras. If you could only get round him to give us all the mahwa flowers in the Hindupore State, why, that means a fortune. We can then compete with the Government distilleries in Bengal," said his friend, much excited.

"Yes, by Jove!" said Toddy. "We could bottle it and label it 'Himalayan Dew,' and sell it in the barracks for a rupee a bottle. Might supply some of the canteens."

"Don't forget the Hindu fairs," said the other friend, who had so far kept quiet. "Wherever you find a blasted missionary preaching, start a retail grog-shop. Christian converts always ape the sahib, and they want drinks. The poor devils drink nothing but arrack—that stinking stuff made of putrid rice. They'd jump at our 'Himalayan Dew' made of mahwa flowers. Our Ochterlony is at Barrackpore now. It was too hot for his wife to go tiger-shooting, so they're staying with a 'big gun' at Barrackpore. Ochterlony came out in the boat with Ram Singh, so I've written to him to put in a word for us with Ram Singh."

"Well done! You bet they must be friends. A fortnight on board ship is like a year in the same club."

"I think we're in the way of luck at last," said Toddy, with a self-complacent smile. "Nothing like sticking to Rajas. You know, Isaacs the jeweller was only five years with Ram Singh, and now he's got his shop in Bond Street. Luck, who was with Nabob Rustom Jang hardly ten years, now owns a tannery."

"Ram Singh has three thousand acres of mahwa-trees. You do all you can to get round him," advised the friend.

"I will go down on my knees, if it comes to that, to get on the right side of Ram Singh," said Toddy boldly.

"Have you ever seen him?"

"No, but I've got his photo. The fellow looks grand in his royal robes. I don't mind being his butler for a year to get this concession. Rustum Jang's butler is worth half a million. His wife regularly spends the summer at Scarborough, and the winter on the Riviera, and here we poor devils have to work like niggers in this grilling weather. Some screw loose somewhere."

"Right you are," said the friend. "We all depend on you. They're reducing opium cultivation. In ten years opium cultivation will be reduced by ten thousand acres. That means a hundred thousand bottles of mahwa spirits every year. I hate the missionaries, but they've done us a good turn in going for opium. Opium goes down and spirits go up."

He had hardly finished the sentence when they heard the third bell rung. In India, before a train starts, a bell is rung three times. The third bell means that the train is really off. As the third bell rang, in came Tara with Mr. Long and Father Browne, followed by the Raja. As Tara and the two clergymen entered the carriage, Mr. Toddy looked hard at Lord Tara, as if to say, "You are an English gentleman."

No sooner did Ram Singh put his foot into the carriage than up jumped Toddy, shouting,

"Out you go, black man!" and then, for the edification of Kellner's waiter, repeated in Hindustani, "Kala admi bahir jao!"

Tara was struck dumb. Mr. Long was ashamed of such muscular Christianity. They both spoke to Toddy, but Toddy was a sahib. What would his two friends say if he travelled with a nigger! He exclaimed: "I've never travelled in my life with a nigger—I'm a gentleman." Sukhdeo signed to Toddy to move away from the door, and let the Raja enter, as the train was about to start. This incensed Toddy. He said: "D——d soor ka bacha!" (D——d son of a pig), and aimed a blow at Sukhdeo.

Sukhdeo, quick as lightning, moved a few inches away. Toddy's blow fell with terrific force on the heavy steel hinges of the door. His wrist was broken. His friends ran for the railway police. Hearing a row in the first class, the guard rushed in, and saw Toddy, badly hurt, with his wrist broken. Toddy's friends returned with the head constable of the railway police. A man, dressed as a clergyman, was standing with his back against the nearest lamp-post, so that it was difficult to make him out in the dark. He whispered something to the police-officer as he came to make inquiries.

"I say, don't make too much of a fuss. We're already half an hour late. Can't stop the train for you to write long yarns in your blessed diary," said the guard to the police-officer.

"It's a case of grievous hurt," said the policeman, shaking his head gravely. "What's your name?" thundered the police-officer to Sukhdeo.

"My name is Sukhdeo Prasad, age fifty-seven, son of Subadar Kamta Prasad, caste Chatri, retired Jemadar of the 49th Bengal Cavalry."

Sukhdeo held four medals—one for the Burma Expedition, two for Afghan campaigns, and one of the Royal Humane Society for saving the life of a British soldier from drowning at the Marble Rocks near Jabalpore.

"Guard," said the policeman, "this man must be detained here for further inquiries, and Mr. Toddy removed to the Railway Hospital."

"I'm going on my pilgrimage to Jagannath," said Sukhdeo firmly. "No power in the world can detain me. I've made my sankalpa (vow), and go I must. You shall never take me alive and I'm not going to die quietly, I can tell you!"

"I will undertake to produce Sukhdeo, if he is wanted," said the Raja, coming forward in the crowd which had by that time collected.

"And who will stand *your* security?" said the Eurasian policeman, with a broad grin.

Mohan Lal could no longer observe silence; that a half-caste fellow should insult a reigning Prince was more than he could stand quietly. He came forward, and said sternly:

"You must know to whom you are speaking.

Mr. Hunt must have told you that it is His Highness Raja Ram Singh, Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India, of Hindupore."

Then Mohan Lal, turning to the man under the lamp-post, said :

"Mr. Hunt, is this farce for your precious secret diary ?"

Mr. Toddy was in great pain ; his friends took him away to see a doctor. The police officer did not press for the detention of Sukhdeo.

When the train had started Mr. Long broke the silence first.

"What can we missionaries do when our own people behave so disgracefully ?" said Mr. Long to Father Browne.

"You are right. A single incident like this spoils ten years' mission-work," replied Father Browne.

"Forgive me for interrupting you," said Lord Tara. "It appears to me that Christian missions in India should try to elevate the low Europeans and Eurasians before they endeavour to convert natives."

"Yes ; what we want is organization for the conversion of low Europeans and Eurasians in this country," remarked Mr. Long. "I am glad that some good ladies have taken up the subject in right earnest at home."

"Yes, I was pleased to read that appeal in the *Church News*," said Tara. "But I think we Christians should humbly apologize to the

Raja for the disgraceful behaviour of a native of Britain."

"I was about to suggest doing so," said Mr. Long.

"Pray don't trouble yourselves any more about it," said the Raja, with a dignity in his manner that impressed Tara.

"We are used to that sort of thing in India," put in Mohan Lal quietly.

"More's the pity," said Mr. Long. "No wonder it causes a feeling of unrest."

The railway-porters shouted "Mokameh! Mokameh!"—the junction of the Loop and Chord lines of the East Indian Railway.

The driver had made up for lost time. Tara and Celitia, Mr. Long and Father Browne, entered the splendid dining-saloon of Messrs. Kellner. The dinner was excellent. Celitia sat next to Tara, and talked to him about Kamala.

Ram Singh and Mohan Lal had made their vows to visit Jagannath, so they could not touch animal food. The shedding of blood in any form is strictly forbidden by Jagannath. So the Raja and Mohan refreshed themselves only with milk, fruit, and sweets. The three Ranis took their meals apart. Hindu ladies do not consider mastication improves personal appearance, so they seldom eat in the presence of men. They put this little vanity down to modesty and love of retirement.

A reserved first-class carriage was now attached

to the train, so there was sleeping accommodation for the five gentlemen.

The Dowager Rani, on learning Sukhdeo's devotion to the Raja, presented him with a splendid shawl as a mark of her appreciation of it.

The next morning the party arrived at Calcutta.

Mr. Sircar received them at the Howrah Station. They drove in carriages over the floating bridge across the river Hooghly.

CHAPTER XXI

THE HINDU IN ANGLO-INDIAN POLITICS

THE party drove to Chowringhee, the Mayfair of Calcutta, where the old Nabob of Hajipore had placed his beautifully furnished house at the disposal of Raja Ram Singh, the son of his old friend. For the first time Lord Tara used sandal-scented soap, so effectual a preservative against mosquito-bites and prickly heat. Men like Ironside seldom hear of it, or ignore it as "native"—a wonderful word in their parlance, which means "nothing good in it."

There were several letters awaiting the Raja and Tara. Mohan Lal, the trusted Minister, opened and attended to those of Raja Ram Singh. Tara found one from Mr. Harvey, which he read aloud to Mohan and Mr. Sircar:

"BARRACKPORE,
"*Wednesday.*

"MY DEAR TARA,

"On my return from Simla I got Mr. Sircar's letter. He says that you are to arrive in

Calcutta to-day. I claim your promise to spend a day or two with me here. I am sending this by my chaprasi on a bicycle. Please reply by him. I am writing to ask the Raja and his party, too. I have room for you all—eight spare bedrooms. You will prefer this cool villa to crowded Chowringhee—dinner on the banks of the holy Ganga.

"Ever yours,
"H. H."

"Of course you will go, Lord Tara. I am very sorry the Raja Sahib cannot accompany you, as he has promised to take the ladies to the famous shrine of Kalighat, about three miles from here. Miss Scott tells me she is going to the 'Writers' Buildings' to report herself to the Surgeon-General of Bengal, and to receive letters of introduction to Cuttack officials. The two missionary gentlemen are busy arranging and packing half a million Gospel Catechisms for distribution at Jagannath, and——" said Mohan Lal.

"Excuse me remarking that it is very liberal-minded of the Raja to allow the missionaries to do that as his guests," said Tara.

Mohan Lal replied: "The Raja's object is to let the representatives of the Church of Rome as well as the Protestant Church see with their own eyes that missionaries have for centuries libelled our sacred Jagannath. They have always

told good people in the West that human beings are sacrificed under the wheels of the Car of Jagannath. The great Indian writer, Sir William Hunter, after very careful investigation of facts, has denied the allegations *in toto*. But a lie that has been circulated for centuries cannot be contradicted in a day. That is why we want missionaries to see and tell the truth."

"It is the very reason, too, why I am anxious to witness your great Car Festival. The spirit of the old Crusaders seems to me to be still living in the wonderful enthusiasm that prompts the sacrifice of so much earthly pleasure and comfort to the service of the Creator and Preserver we all alike worship. It cannot possibly proceed from a sordid or unworthy motive; it must therefore be acceptable as homage to the God who desires to be worshipped in spirit and in truth," said Tara.

"It certainly is a wonderful sight, when one remembers that for about two thousand years the same pilgrimage has taken place every year," said Mohan Lal.

"Will you give me the pleasure of your company to Barrackpore?" said Tara.

"I am sorry I must accompany Raja Sahib to Kalighat. But Sircar will go with you; he will be delighted to see Mr. Harvey. You can take a drive with him this morning to look about you at Calcutta, and go to Barrackpore by the motor-boat at four o'clock. But you must allow

Mr. Sircar to return here to-night, as he has promised the Raja to go in advance to make all the arrangements for our journey. We are rather a large party, and after Cuttack have three days' journey to do by road. That means about two hundred men for the elephants, horses, and tents.

Tara was about to send a letter in reply, but Mohan suggested a telegram to save the poor chaprasi from doing sixteen miles under the mid-day sun. This pleased the chaprasi immensely. He with his bike on a motor-boat! Grand prospect! Mohan told Sukhdeo to look after the chaprasi.

The chaprasi was a Mahomedan named Fateh Khan. His scarlet uniform showed that he belonged to the Foreign Department; therefore Sukhdeo knew that he was a chaprasi not of the Bengal Government, but of the Government of India.

In twenty-five years' service in many an emergency many Commanding Officers had made use of Sukhdeo Prasad in obtaining news for the Intelligence Department. He knew the methods employed. He was one of the most loyal soldiers of the Native Army.

Lord Tara had a delightful drive with Mr. Sircar along the esplanade to Government House, with its views over the evergreen Maidan, refreshed even in summer by the heavy night dews. As they passed Government House,

Sircar pointed out the majestic staircase, which could be seen from the streets.

"That house represents more concentrated authority than any in the world, past or present," remarked Sircar.

"Is your Indian Empire really the greatest known to history?" said Tara doubtfully.

"The population of India is three hundred millions, or fifty millions more than the total population of the Greek and Roman Empires at their zenith. Three-fourths of the entire population of the British Empire rise reverently and salaam the Viceroy of India. The inhabitants of Bengal alone are as numerous as the white population under the President of the United States. Add to that the neighbouring province of Allahabad, and you have more people than are ruled over by the Czar of Russia. That gives some idea of your Indian Empire," said Sircar.

"It never could have been ours but by the will of the people," said Tara thoughtfully. "I suppose they prefer English to Mahomedan rule; many of the Hindu Princes fought bravely to retain their ancient rights."

"It is an Anglo-Indian fallacy, Lord Tara, that the British won India from the Moguls. No doubt the Battle of Plassey was fought against the Mahomedans, but a quarter of a century after that memorable battle, when Burke moved the impeachment of Warren Hastings in

the House of Commons, Hindu Sindhia occupied the Mogul capital, Delhi. The last Mahratta War dated as late as 1818, and the Sikh Durbar and army were not finally overcome until 1849. The British, therefore, won India from the Hindus, and perhaps Hindu sentiment may be worth some consideration."

"You have clubs in India where the English and the Hindu may mix," observed Tara.

"Hardly two where the two races may mix," answered Sircar; "there are clubs where the two may not."

"Indeed!" said Tara, in surprise.

"You would hardly believe it, Lord Tara, but the Regatta Club has a strict rule that no native, even a reigning Prince, may be admitted within its sacred precincts. So much for the respect due to poor India in one of her own chief cities!" said Sircar.

"I will take care never to put my foot within its doors," said Tara indignantly. "Perhaps Mr. Toddy might be there!"

"It is the reason why Mr. Harvey has always refused to belong to it," replied Sircar.

"I suppose the Mahomedan rulers are freer from Hindu sentiment," said Tara, wishing to change the subject.

"The so-called Mahomedan States contain a large number of Hindus; in fact, the majority are Hindus, and, being an intelligent race, they always manage to exert a great deal of influence.

It was a Hindu Prime Minister through whose influence, fifty years ago, the British succeeded in getting the premier Mahomedan Prince of India to assign to them the large province of Berar; and it was, again, a Hindu Prime Minister who was recently useful to Lord Curzon's Government in the permanent leasing of that province—a province as large as Ireland."

"I suppose, then, that the Mahomedan influence has not been able to suppress the strong caste feeling among the Hindu majority in the States ruled by them?"

"On the contrary, Hindus nominally converted to Islam hardly ever become reconciled to the surrender of the strong hereditary influence of caste, nor can Christianized Indians ever completely shake it off."

"It is getting rather hot now, but I have enjoyed the drive very much, thanks to your interesting conversation. You certainly have what we call the 'gift of the gab'—a rare accomplishment."

CHAPTER XXII

SECRET POLICE REPORTS

TARA and Mr. Sircar started at four o'clock in the motor-boat from Calcutta to Barrackpore, about sixteen miles up the Hooghly.

The river here is very interesting—a wonderful blending of the East with the West. On one side may be seen the merchant steamers of Liverpool and New York; on the other the flights of broad steps leading to the holy river for the convenience of Hindu devotional ablutions.

All the bustle in those trading vessels was for material comfort; all the animation among the Hindu brotherhood was for spiritual benefit.

On those banks, sacred to Hindu religious observances, the Danes, the Dutch, the Portuguese, and the French had, in turn, struggled for supremacy in India. French Chandernagore—only twenty miles from Calcutta—alone remains a witness to that conflict.

Tara had been much struck by Sukhdeo's devotion to the Raja, and asked Mr. Sircar to

give him some particulars of his career, which, he was told, was a very notable one.

He had been present at the Battle of Maiwand, in Afghanistan, in which Ayub Khan defeated the British forces. It was a fight against fearful odds, so said the British Generals. Sukhdeo was mentioned in the despatches for a Victoria Cross for a special act of heroism to save a wounded comrade of the Inniskilling Fusiliers; but Sukhdeo was a "native," and therefore did not get the much-coveted V.C. It was reserved for the white soldier only. Sukhdeo took this to heart, for he was a proud Chatri. They, for the last thousand years, had fought bravely. The Chatri is the fighting or warrior caste of India; its members were proud of their hereditary tradition.

His grandfather was in the service of the King of Oudh when Sarfaraz Khan, the Talukdar of Gonda, proclaimed himself independent.

Raghbar Prasad, the grandfather of Sukhdeo, and Mirza Haidar Beg were sent to bring the rebel Talukdar, dead or alive. At the risk of their lives, these two brought the rebel chief to Lucknow. He was made an example of in truly Mogul style. His legs were tied together with a strong iron chain to the right hind-leg of an elephant, and the animal was made to go at a quick pace from Kaisarbagh to Golaganj, through the Aminabad bazaars, to serve as a mild warning to others. By the time the elephant passed by the Baradari, Sarfaraz Khan was practically

skinned alive by the friction of the metallic road. At the end of the journey only the ankles were found tied to the chain; the rest had perished in the violent transit. The King of Oudh was pleased with Haidar Beg and Raghbar Prasad, and both were made Panjhazari, or "commanders of five thousand troops." Both of them had land of equal value given to them—no difference was made between Haidar Beg, who belonged to the ruling class, and Raghbar Prasad, who came from the subject race. Sukhdeo wondered if now colour made the difference. There was no difference of colour between the Musalman officer and the Hindu officer of the King of Oudh's army; perhaps that was the reason why they were treated in the same way. In short, Sukhdeo resented the difference in treatment, and sent in his papers. He returned to his village in Gonda district. He had not long to wait before he was taken into the civil employ of Raja Ram Singh, through the recommendation of Mohan Lal. His brother, Sarju Prasad, was an ordinary Sepoy in the Native Army. He had served the Government for over twenty years, but was reduced for "disobedience of orders"—"insubordination." The story was as follows: The distinguished Colonel Ironside, of the Political Department, was then in the Intelligence Department. Sarju Prasad was his orderly—always in his veranda, carrying out his orders. Mrs. Ironside had rather a large

family, and was in delicate health. Her seventh daughter was born at Chinsura. Dr. Cleghorn, the civil surgeon, advised Colonel Ironside to get a native nurse, but the Colonel had a tremendous reputation as a bully—his domestic servants always dreaded him, and circulated evil reports about him.

Every native nurse Dr. Cleghorn spoke to refused point-blank to nurse poor little Miss Ironside.

There were no English nurses in the place, so the doctor decided that the baby must be fed on ass's milk—they would not object to nourish Miss Ironside!

Now, Colonel Ironside had passed the Higher Proficiency examination in Hindustani with credit. In Anglo-Indian clubs it was well known that he "spoke the language like a native." Whenever Sir James Anderson, head of the Intelligence Department, wanted a holiday, Colonel Ironside officiated for him.

Colonel Ironside certainly had a ready pen. He did not confine himself strictly to logic and stern facts, but, as he enjoyed among his colleagues a reputation as an Oriental linguist, his "yarns" were taken as gospel.

Many an Indian Prince figured in the "Black Book" of the Government because Colonel Ironside had got hold of the wrong end of the stick. He could not manage all the threads of the "S.B." reports. No doubt they were often

misleading. A native spy on five shillings a week was told to watch the Prince of Turkistan, who was visiting India with his harem. Now, that a wretched fellow on five shillings a week could not approach a Tartar Prince would be apparent even to Macaulay's proverbial schoolboy. But the red-tape of the Intelligence Department did not allow anyone to think for himself or to suppress news from such a fellow on such a matter. If he did not send in a fair "weekly report" he would be dismissed. So he had to fall back upon bazaar gossip. Oriental imagination was often of great value to satisfy strict disciplinarians like Colonel Ironside.

He had before him the following:

TRANSLATION.

"*Confidential.*

"From Hashmat Khan, Khufia Daroga (Detective Chief Constable).

"To Charles Hunt, Esq.,
Assistant Superintendent,
Intelligence Department,
Calcutta.

"SIR,—I have the honour to inform you that, under your orders, I have carefully shadowed the King of Turkistan and the forty ladies of his harem. It appears from a report I heard from most reliable sources in the Chandu Khana (opium den) that the Tartar King celebrated

his forty-first birthday last week. According to Tartar law, he must add to his harem on every birthday—there must be one for every year of the age of the King.

"In his travels in India he fell in love with the wife of the Judge of Bundlewara (as your honour knows, a very stout lady with ruddy cheeks), considered a great beauty from the Tartar point of view. He offered the Judge four lakhs of rupees, but he demands six lakhs for his wife. The Tartar Prince was willing to pay this sum; but Masud Aka, the chief of his harem, is hopeful of securing a stouter lady for half the money. Besides, the Judge's wife when dyspeptic, squints, which is a bad omen.

"I shall report further development of this important intrigue, which may shake the foundations of the Indian Empire.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

(Signed) "HASHMAT KHAN.

"Submitted for orders.

(Signed) "CHARLES HUNT."

Colonel Ironside had to give orders on this important case. Was the Tartar Prince a secret agent of the Russian Government trying to test the honesty of distinguished Indian Judges? That was the question he was considering when his orderly, Sarju Prasad, gave him a chit from Dr. Cleghorn.

"My dear Ironside,

"I am sorry that I could not secure a nurse for baby. Ass's milk is equally good. See to the feeding: give her oats twice a day. I will see Mrs. Ironside to-morrow, unless I am wanted meanwhile.

"Yours truly,

"David Cleghorn."

Colonel Ironside thought it would be very easy to get an ass—he saw dozens of them in the streets.

"Sarju, ek gadha mangta." (Sarju, I want an ass).

"Jo hukm" (I will obey orders).

"Ham Club Jata—tum gadha acha dana deo" (I'm going to the club—you feed the donkey on good oats).

"Jo hukm," replied the obedient orderly.

When leaving for the club, Colonel Ironside told his wife it was all right; the baby would have ass's milk that very evening.

He jumped into his buggy and drove to the club. There he had a game of billiards and abused the "natives." As he was driving home he thought of the Tartar Prince and his fat beauty.

"Fancy anyone falling in love with fat Pamela!" said Ironside to himself.

He entered his bungalow and called Sarju.

"Jo hukm."

"Gadha laya?" (Have you the donkey?).

"Han, Huzur" (Yes, your Majesty).

Colonel Ironside took the hurricane lantern from the veranda and went to have a look at the animal.

"Why, it's a jackass! That Sarju ought to be flogged."

He shouted in a rage: "Ham gadha nahin—mem-sahib gadha—you d—— fool!" (I wanted not an ass like me, but a lady-ass like my wife!).

"Ham garib admi Huzur, kysa bolay!" (I'm a poor man, your Majesty—how dare I say so?) said the trembling orderly. He had never dreamt of addressing a lady as a donkey. Besides, she had always been kind to him. She allowed her husband's military orderly eightpence a month for perambulating her little Alice for an hour every evening when he was off duty as orderly!

Colonel Ironside sent a chit across to the Subadar (native officer) of the regiment to reduce the rank of Sarju Prasad for "insubordination." Sarju, rather than submit to the injustice, left the 97th Bengal Infantry and went home to his village.

The next day Colonel Ironside sent for Hashmat Khan, and told him he wanted an ass for milk for the baby. There was no difficulty—an ass was there in half an hour. This confirmed Colonel Ironside's conviction that Sarju Prasad was an impudent fellow, who did not know even his own language. It did not occur to him that

Hashmat Khan understood him because he referred to the milk for the baby. This was his belief for a good ten years, when he repeated the incident to Mr. Harvey at Karimabad. The latter could not help smiling, as he replied:

"Your orderly was not to blame. In Hindustani gadha means 'jackass,' and gadhi a 'she-ass.' That one letter makes all the difference."

"Confound the genders!" exclaimed Ironside. "The fellow ought to have known I didn't want a donkey to ride. He knew well enough what I meant."

Colonel Ironside's ignorance of the trifling distinction between a gadha and a gadhi turned a loyal native soldier into a disaffected subject of the King.

Both brothers had served in the Native Army, and both had their grievances. They were big men in their village, and everyone in it resented their wrongs. It aroused many bitter feelings against the British.

Tara was sorry to hear all this. It was another cause for unrest, and there were too many causes for it below the surface of official routine.

The motor-boat steamed into Durga-ghat, a flight of marble steps built by the generous Rani Rasmani at Barrackpore. It is reserved for the Hindu widows bathing in the holy river. There are two rooms for their use in changing their clothes. All the articles, copper "kosha-

kushi," etc., necessary for Hindu worship are here in charge of a Brahman.

He received the strangers most politely. It was generally believed that no European was allowed to use these steps, but Sircar assured Lord Tara that good Europeans were welcome still, although men of the Toddy class have done so much to degrade their countrymen in the eyes of the Hindus. Long ago Englishmen commanded respect in all parts of India, or they would never have been allowed into the very *sanctum sanctorum* of Hinduism, the temple of Jagannath itself, which was made over by the Brahman priests to Mr. Hunter a hundred years ago.

"There was a time when Europeans were canonized by the natives," said Sircar. "If you ever go to the Deccan, Lord Tara, not far from the fortress of Golconda, you will find the shrine of 'Mansaram Shah.' Thousands of the natives, mostly Mahomedan, offer flowers at the grave of the great man buried there. A fair is still held there in his honour."

"I suppose he was a great Mahomedan saint?" said Tara.

"He was neither a Mahomedan nor a saint. The man buried there was a French soldier named M. Raymond. His name in Oriental parlance has become 'Mansaram.' The word 'Shah' signifies a Moslem saint. M. Raymond was no Mahomedan—he faithfully followed the religion

of his ancestors until his death. He was kind to the native soldiers under him. They loved and worshipped him as the Indian Sepoys to-day do Lord Roberts. But for the Sepoys' personal attachment to 'Bobs Bahadur' the 'flying column' to Candahar would have been impossible."

CHAPTER XXIII

AT BARRACKPORE

THE native name of Barrackpore is Chanak, and it is associated with that of the great pandit who is the Hindu counterpart of Lord Chesterfield. The sayings of "Chanakya Pandit" are household words in Bengal, like those of the immortal Sadi in Persia. The name Chanak is, therefore, more suggestive and musical to the Hindu ear. But the official name continues Barrackpore, and tends to perpetuate the memory of the Mutiny fifty years ago.

The Government paraded British troops in the streets of Lahore on May 10, 1907, because the Mutiny broke out on May 10, 1857. They forgot that the rebel Hindu Sepoys' calendar differs from the Gregorian calendar, and that therefore the fiftieth anniversary of that fatal day was not on May 10, 1907. When a Bengali pointed out the mistake in the columns of the *London Thunderer*, Anglo-Indian worthies looked at each other, while the honest Briton laughed in his sleeve.

Mr. Harvey met his friends on the veranda steps. It was a hot June afternoon, and the tea-table was laid under a great banyan-tree. The temperature beneath it was quite ten degrees below that in the veranda. There is something cooling in the leaves of the mighty banyan; that is perhaps the reason why the Hindu honours it as sacred—a tree given to him by the gods for his use.

Mr. Harvey and his guests talked over the incidents of the tiger-hunt, and of his visit to Simla.

They dined early, that Mr. Sircar might return to Calcutta that evening. He was to start for Cuttack the next morning.

Harvey made Tara promise to stay with him until the following afternoon, when he would lend him his motor for the return journey, and accompany him part of the way.

"Now I must show you our beautiful park, Tara. It is historical, you know, and the largest banyan-tree in Bengal is there. The boudoir of the Vicereine at the Viceregal residence is protected from the Indian sun by this tree. It's the favourite resort of the English ladies of Calcutta. The Rani Kamala is worth them all put together. Have you met her yet?"

Tara looked earnestly at his old friend. He was afraid of giving him pain, and yet he longed to speak freely of his hopes.

Harvey continued with rather a sad smile:

"You need not be afraid to tell me all about it, dear old boy; I never thought it possible she could be mine."

"I cannot believe it yet; the Raja did not refuse me when I told him how it was; he said she had the power of choosing for herself. I did see her on the journey to Calcutta, and she looked kindly on me; so I hope there is some chance for me."

"My dear Tara, you may consider yourself an engaged man. I have heard on very good authority that Rani Kamala is quite willing to listen to you whenever you have an opportunity of speaking to her on the subject nearest to your heart. I am delighted to know it, for her sake as well as yours."

"That is like yourself, Herbert—always noble and unselfish."

"Your happiness may be very near at hand, Tara. A Hindu marriage is a simple ceremony; I have been present at one or two. I quite expect it will have happened before we meet again."

"Do you really think so?" said Tara.

"I feel sure of it. If I were you I would take the precaution of buying a wedding-ring before you leave Calcutta. Of course, you must be properly married on both sides."

They had by this time reached a rustic bench in the park, cut out of the trunk of a babul-tree. It was the seat memorable as the place where

the devoted and chivalrous Warren Hastings used to smoke the Indian hookah, in the company of the beautiful Baroness Imhoff, during their romantic courtship preceding the divorce that enabled him to marry her. It was a favourite resort of lovers.

Here Harvey and Tara sat down together.

"This is a kind of Armida's ground, an enchanted spot," remarked Harvey. "You will have to bring your wife here when you are married. I hope you will come and see me before you take her away, for I suppose you will go home then."

Tara was bewildered. He could not realize it all.

"I wish I could feel as sure of it as you are, Herbert. I had not dared to believe it; it's much too good to be true."

"You'd better try to think of it, Tara, as you will have to take care of the dear little Princess, who knows nothing of the world as yet."

"I suppose I ought to take her home before the winter; but I should like to spend part of the year always in India."

"I suppose you will wear Indian dress on the journey from Cuttack, if you are in the Raja's party?"

"I thought of that; Mr. Sircar will kindly order that for me, and my Hindu servant can see it is all right."

"The Princess must have an English outfit for the voyage. You can easily get that at

Calcutta. You should ask your mother to meet you in London, and see about the trousseau. Of course, I know one or two ladies in Calcutta who would enjoy helping the Rani, but you wouldn't care to meet strangers just then."

As they strolled home together they decided that it would be pleasanter to sleep on the veranda than indoors, although it was not very hot, being a year of an early monsoon. They suddenly heard some shots fired in the bazaar.

Mr. Harvey sent Fateh Khan to inquire.

He did not return for some time.

"What could that be?" asked Tara.

"Very difficult to say. The Mutiny broke out in Barrackpore like this, suddenly," replied Harvey, in a manner that showed he was anxious.

"But I suppose we should be strong enough now to suppress a mutiny?" said Tara.

"But a rising of the civil population is much worse than a mutiny. A disciplined army does not mind a pitched battle; it's the sniping that worries us. Don't you remember how a handful of Boers harassed us for three years? A sort of sniping has been going on in Bengal for the last four years. Men are stabbed or clubbed to death. Notwithstanding all our organization, we cannot get any evidence against the murderers."

"There must be something seriously wrong," observed Tara.

"No doubt. It is the arrogance of a few

Ironsides that has driven some of the most loyal Hindus into the camp of the disaffected."

"But surely you know who are against us?"

"I am afraid we don't. Our Intelligence Department is very faulty. However we may denounce caste from a Christian point of view, we have to recognize it in India from an Imperial standpoint. Only a Hindu understands a Hindu, but we watch Hindu unrest through Mahomedan agency, supervised by some half-caste Eurasian inspectors. The Government argues that the Mahomedan and the Eurasian will tell the truth against the Hindu. They must know the truth before they can tell it. How can they know it, when they are not allowed to eat or mix with the Hindus?" said Harvey.

"I heard something like that at home," said Tara. "It appears that a really good old soul, a retired Bengal Governor, put a scheme before the India Board for looking after the Hindu youths in England, to see that they did not get into the clutches of Socialists."

"I know all about it. They kicked out the loyal Bengali who started the scheme and set the retired Governor in motion. The wonder is that more mischief is not done."

"What do you think is at the root of all this?"

"Our unconquerable conceit, which is called self-reliance," answered Harvey.

At this moment Fateh Khan returned with a

message from the police that a police-detective had been killed by some Bengalis. The police offered a reward of one thousand rupees for a clue that might lead to arrests.

It struck midnight. Tara and Harvey retired to bed.

CHAPTER XXIV

IRISH SIGNS AND HINDU SIGNS

TARA and Harvey breakfasted early together under the banyan tree. There were many letters and telegrams for Harvey to answer.

He had to report the incident of the previous night. It was a very unsatisfactory state of things.

"It reminds me of the days of the Fenian agitation in Ireland," said Harvey. "If you compare the Hindu Swaraj (Home Rule) movement with the Irish disturbances, you will find a close similarity to each other in them. In Ireland they consider it a duty to sing Irish patriotic songs. The 'Bandemataram' is no more seditious than the Irish ones were."

"To be more seditious was impossible," remarked Tara. "The Hibernian sings:

"'Take, then, our answer, England—we speak
it straight and true;
We have but hands to strike you, and hearts
to hate for you;

And we cast off our bondage from backs that would not bow,
We cast your bland advances back to the givers now.'"

"Some Hindu sang that at the Howrah railway platform when I arrived," said Harvey gravely.

"Did you notice the curious sign the Raja's mahout Poltu made before entering the tiger-forest? He bent down and touched the feet of the Pujari of the temple. The priest said nothing, only held the palm of his right hand upwards and touched the second joint of the ring finger with the right thumb. That sign seemed to satisfy Poltu that no tiger would touch him. What could it be?" said Tara.

"It was a secret password or sign—a sort of Masonic symbol. Poltu was receiving the blessing of the Pujari, his spiritual chief. What the Pope is to all Roman Catholics the Brahman priest is to the Hindu. Without his blessing and protection nothing can prosper. In theory, the Brahman can possess no property of his own. All he has is in trust for the people—for their secular education, their spiritual welfare. He only takes one meal a day, may not use raiment made by a tailor—only a simple cotton robe wrapped about his body. His simple life commands the respect of the people, and they seek his aid and sympathy in all their troubles. Anglo-Indians almost ignore the immense in-

fluence of Princes and Brahmans over the countless masses of the people. Caste is regarded in India as the 'Angel of Light.' You know the mystic charm of the mantras? They have a double aspect. They are in a form terrible oaths, which bind together Indian caste in its glorious origin and hallowed traditions. Hinduism is a great religious society, as well as a political organization. We must work with it, or be destroyed by it."

"In many ways it resembles the Hibernian Clan-na-gael — that powerful successor of the Fenian brotherhood. They, too, have their secret passwords and signs; they, too, receive the benediction of Pope Pius X. and Cardinal Moran," said Tara.

"The Hibernian Society has its political and agrarian side, too, but only Irish Roman Catholics can belong to it," replied Harvey.

"There was a similarity between the Pujari's sign and the sign of recognition of the Hibernians which struck me," said Tara. "When a Hibernian wishes to reassure a member of his order he puts the tip of the little finger of the right hand to the outer corner of the right eye. His friend responds by taking hold of the right lapel of his coat with the thumb and little finger of the right hand. They then understand each other, and feel able to oppose, with barbed wire, the rush of a cavalry regiment."

"The Bengali Babus rioted and broke forty

heads in the heart of Calcutta, the capital of our Indian Empire, and not a single arrest was made. We do not know who shot Allen, of Dacca. There must have been a perfect code of understanding among the Hindus," said Harvey.

"Among the thousands of pilgrims that are going to Jagannath, who knows how many 'Molly Maguires' may be among them?" remarked Tara.

"The Hindu sadhu (hermit) is sworn to do all he can to protect the religion and the interests of the Indian Motherland," said Harvey. "There are scores of female hermits like the women auxiliaries of the Order of the Hibernians. A sadhu organization of such gigantic proportions, with their passwords, their grips, and their signs, is well worth serious study from the Imperial point of view, but it has been entirely neglected by our Government. I suppose you know that just before the Mutiny, in 1857, pancakes—chapatis—were used instead of passwords. Sometimes trees are besmeared with a peculiar kind of mud. The peripatetic hermit reads these signs aright, and carries the message from shrine to shrine."

"How can the Government show so much negligence upon important subjects like these?" said Tara.

"Because they believe that we know so much about India," replied Harvey, "whereas we are absolutely in the dark. We cannot see the subtle but sure progress of Pan-Hinduism under our

very noses. That giant is wide awake. He has never slept for three thousand years—only occasionally pretending to sleep."

"Who knows how many 'Whitefeet,' 'Blackfeet,' or 'Rockites' there may be among the pilgrims alone?" remarked Tara.

"How many Englishmen are there in India who could follow a conversation of the 'Whiteboys' of Jagannath?" said Harvey. "Are we wise to ignore the whole thing as superstition, and not to inquire into it? The unwritten law, the mystic syllable of the sadhu, which governs this huge organization of Pan-Hinduism, is a sealed book to us. Like the Hibernians, whose cry is for the final and complete independence of Ireland, the Hindu Home Rule agitators are working at such distant centres as Calcutta, Poona, Lahore, London, and Paris, with a unity that defies the authority of our Government."

"A friend of mine, who called one day in Downing Street before the change of Ministry, told me that the present unrest in India is due to the rise of Japan."

"There is a great deal in that," said Harvey. "The Rajas earn the goodwill of the people by allowing them freedom in using arms—a gift appreciated by everyone. With us it is just the reverse. Our Arms Act, in its rigour, deprives our subjects of a right to use arms allowed in all Native States. Often a loyal and honest landowner is worried by tigers, and has no firearms

to kill them with. It is pinpricks like these that make the Hindu disloyal, for he sees that we deny him what the Rajas allow. Sir Henry Goutt, after thirty years in India, says we preserve the Native States as an object-lesson, but is it always in our favour?"

"We hear much of Pan-Islam, but it is not in India so important a power to us as that of Pan-Hinduism. There are but sixty millions of Mahomedans under our rule in India, while the centre of Hinduism is Jagannath, with his two hundred millions of worshippers, before whom all differences of wealth, position, and caste disappear, as by the wand of a magician," said Tara.

"The unity of our Indian Empire depends upon our consideration and respect for the feelings and religious convictions of the countless subjects who have placed themselves under our protection. The wisest of our statesmen have recognized that fact—Lord Beaconsfield most of all in his wide Eastern sympathies. The Christianity we have to teach is by personal example, and how lamentably we often fail to convince the strangers in race and language of our boasted superiority as a nation!" said Harvey.

"I doubt whether any corner of our beautiful Indian possession could show the crime and misery that many a home missionary has discovered among the wretched heathen to be found in the poorer quarters of our great cities," said

Tara. "You know, we have an Oxford Mission for London now, and I have sometimes done a little work for it. The stories I have heard were enough to make one blush for one's country and religion"

"The glitter of so-called civilization certainly covers a thousand crimes and miseries. The assassination of the King of Portugal, and the attempt to kill an innocent King and Queen, just married, in Madrid, are fresh in our memory. The would-be murderer in Madrid was an educated and well-to-do young man. He suffered from what the Germans call 'Des Lebens Verdruss'—weariness of life. There is hardly a country in Europe which has not been the scene of cruel regicide. In Austria the amiable Empress Elizabeth was murdered, and so was King Humbert in Italy. The terrible end of King Alexander and Queen Draga in Servia is still fresh in our memory. The Presidents Carnot in France and McKinley in America were also murdered in cold blood; while Berlin, among other Continental cities, is noted for the number of suicides that take place there. The 'superstitious' Hindu, in his primitive home, is freer from crimes of violence than the civilized European in his mansions, lit up by electricity," said Harvey.

Mr. Harvey was recalled to his official work, and Tara had to wander in the park by himself. He wondered whether all that Harvey had told

him was true about Kamala. He certainly would not forget the ring.

In the late afternoon Tara drove back to Calcutta, and found the Raja and his family not yet returned from their pilgrimage. He dined with Celitia.

CHAPTER XXV

HINDU MUSIC

On the morning after Tara's return from Barrackpore the Raja's English guests all met at breakfast, and many plans were discussed.

It was Saturday, and the Raja had fixed the following Wednesday for his departure for Cuttack. By that time all the arrangements would be complete for the road journey to Jagannath.

Father Browne, however, decided to go to Cuttack in time to celebrate Mass on Sunday morning for some converts he had there.

Celitia had been invited to dinner the previous evening by some friends of Mr. Long, who wished to make her acquaintance. She, too, had been requested to take up her duties at the hospital as soon as possible, so she decided to start on Tuesday in advance of the rest of the party. For many years Mr. Long had been known at Cuttack for his compassionate kindness to the pilgrims, and he wished to spend two or three days there, and help to initiate Celitia into

her trying duties at that busy season, although not officially engaged at the hospital. He had many friends among the Brahman priests, who welcomed his Christian brotherly kindness to them and their people. So he, too, arranged to make the journey at the same time.

The Raja and his family returned the same morning from their pilgrimage to Kalighat.

Rani Kamala had there made the acquaintance of a charming young Bengali lady.

Her name was Saroj, which in the language of the Hindu means "a fresh-water lily." The name suited her well.

When she met Kamala she slightly elevated her eyebrows, and then gave a piquant glance at the lovely stranger. They needed no further introduction. Kamala admired Saroj at once, and when leaving the shrine invited her to pay her a visit that day.

As a young girl Saroj had the reputation of being naughty—at least, so an uncle of hers who was very fond of her said.

She did not mind it—in fact, she rather liked being addressed as "Naughty Sajja"—Sajja being a pet-name for Saroj.

She was her uncle's favourite, because both enjoyed making someone uneasy for the day.

She was pretty—prettier than her mother and her sisters—and she knew it. One afternoon a young Hindu Judge suddenly appeared in a glittering barouche with prancing horses. He

was a handsome young man. Half a dozen lazy pampered chaprasis always lounged in her father's veranda. They received this young gentleman, and showed him into the drawing-room. Saroj was there. She looked at him with admiration—he thought her the prettiest girl he had ever seen. It was a case of love at first sight. She had a graceful figure and spoke well. Her wit and fancy captivated her admirer, and he was at her feet before anyone suspected it. "I would lay down my life for you," he said.

"What should I do with a dead lover?" was her ready reply.

"How cruel you are! Tell me what I can do to prove my love," said he earnestly. He had fine teeth.

"Sacrifice to me your two front teeth!" said Saroj, in jest.

In the meantime her mother came in. He had only a week's leave. In a fortnight's time he called again. He presented her with a little casket. It contained his two front teeth. He wore two false ones—it was a token of his love for her.

They became engaged, and she had his gift made into a brooch, which she always wore to remind her of her husband's love.

Saroj came to see Kamala in the afternoon, and Celitia was there with young Kishen Singh.

Kamala's guitar was lying on a sofa—she had been playing it and singing with her cousin.

Kishen begged Saroj to sing him a Bengali song.

She took up the guitar and sang to him a Hindu song.

"The Hindu lady is a mystery to me," said Celitia. "I had no idea Indian ladies were so musical. I thought they did not care to take so much trouble. I never had time to study music, but I am naturally fond of it. Last night on the balcony someone sang so well."

"That is a Mirasi of Lahore; he is employed here," said Kamala.

"He sang in the wild, haunting style of a Hungarian improvisatore," remarked Celitia.

"No wonder; the Hindu is essentially a musical race. We have music for every one of our festivals. Nothing is complete without music," observed Saroj.

"Like our Highlanders," said Celitia. "I should like to see some printed Hindu music."

"I am afraid it would be difficult to transcribe our music into English form, our scales and notes being different from yours. Our songs have been orally transmitted for thousands of years, and Hindus being a highly sensitive race, there is much emotion and variety in our music. We have also simple and dignified tunes," said Saroj.

"Your sweet, subtle melody is charming," said Celitia. "Lord Tara told me that the touching melody of the Raja's mantra brought

tears into his eyes, and you know that doesn't often happen to men."

Kamala blushed deeply as she heard this. Saroj noticed it, but went on talking about Hindu music.

"If you study our good music, you will find more subtle quarter tones. Your National Anthem has much Hindu melody in it."

"Is there no book of Hindu songs in English?" asked Celitia.

"Yes, the 'Cashmeri Love-Songs'; but you should not read those until you have made up your mind to get married," said Saroj, with a look full of meaning.

"Why?" asked Celitia, laughing.

"Because the sweet-love strains of our 'Pilu' will make you unhappy unless you are in your husband's arms. We have most stimulating tunes for various occasions. For the world I would not let you two unmarried ladies be disturbed with the heart-ravishing strains of 'Pilu,'" said the young Hindu wife.

"Indeed?" said Celitia.

"I have an uncle—a confirmed bachelor—who often asked me to sing 'Kokil Kalo.' When I was not initiated into love-affairs I used to sing it, but now I refuse to sing that particular song to him because I know that it must affect his nerves. Music is to make one happy. Music that disturbs one's happiness should be avoided like champagne that gives one a headache."

"Then I must give up all hope of hearing your 'Pilu,'" said Celitia.

"Your drooping eyelids show that you are in love. Husband and 'Pilu' are sure to follow," said Saroj, in an encouraging manner.

"You speak from experience," remarked Celitia, laughing; "but I am wondering how it is you speak English so beautifully, even better than the Rani Kamala."

"I spent six months in England with my husband after we were married. I have an uncle who has settled down in London. We went to see him. Poor fellow! I used to worry him dreadfully; but we were capital friends, all the same."

"I hope we shall meet again," said Rani Kamala, as her visitor took her leave.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE REV. LONG ENGAGED TO MISS SCOTT

MR. LONG was much interested in Celitia's work. She was so evidently in earnest in her wish to devote herself to the service of the people she had come to help.

In his long experience as a missionary in India he had never before met a woman so likely to gain real influence over the sensitive minds of the Hindu race he truly loved.

She had told him the romantic story of her young mother, saved from a cruel fate and tenderly cared for by the very people whose religious sentiments are sometimes disregarded by the authorities. Lord Roberts, in his recent book about India, finally established the fact that it was the low-caste Hindus employed at the Government manufactory of cartridges for the native troops before the Mutiny who made known the secret use of the materials that offended the caste sentiment of the Sepoy army. Thus their sentiment was aroused, a criminal error that cost thousands of precious lives and a

loss of honour and prestige to the British nation from which it has hardly yet recovered.

"You know that my great-uncle, James Long, made a determined stand against the English indigo-planters fifty years ago," said Mr. Long to Celitia. "They treated the Hindu peasants worse than slaves, and the best proof of the insufficient protection then afforded by our laws is that he was actually prosecuted and imprisoned for making known their wrongs. He suffered, however, in a good cause, and he had his reward in vindicating the name of Christian from the desecration that has often been brought upon it, not only in India, but in that 'happy Christian land' where I have seen crime and misery I never witnessed among any so-called 'heathen' people. I was a curate in the south of London for some years before I came to India, and more depressing work has never come in my way."

"I don't think we have many men of rank who do so much for their people as the Raja Ram Singh," said Celitia. "I have spent three of the happiest weeks of my life at Hindupore. Rani Kamala is the sweetest girl I have ever met. I don't know if you have heard that Lord Tara has fallen in love with her—indeed, I believe he has made a proposal to the Raja."

Mr. Long was not altogether surprised to hear this. He had seen Tara and Kamala at Mogul-Serai Junction. He only said: "Lord Tara will be a very fortunate man if he wins so charm-

ing a bride," adding, after a short pause: "I, too, have lost my heart lately, Miss Scott. I have never met anyone I felt would be in such complete sympathy with my wish to do real good to India—your heart is set upon the same object as mine. Will you share my labours with me, and be my loving companion for life?"

"It is so sudden; I had not dreamt of this," said Celitia, blushing deeply. "Besides, I have just entered into a three years' engagement at the Cuttack Hospital."

"I would not ask you to break it; but perhaps I could find some work at Cuttack, too, before long. Will you give me a chance of happiness, dear Celitia, the sweetest name I ever heard? You are so unlike other women who have taken up a profession to 'assert their rights,' as they say. My idea of 'Women's Rights' is that of the exquisite lines by a lady, which perhaps you know?"

"I'm afraid not," said Celitia.

"I know them by heart, but I never expected to find a woman they suited so well. May I say them to you?"

Celitia looked gratefully at Mr. Long. He had the emotional note in his voice which clergymen do not always possess. "What comes from the heart goes to the heart," is a true proverb.

He was handsome, too, with his bright eyes beaming with kindness and sympathy, and the firm, expressive mouth.

"You are kind; please do," said Celitia.

"'RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

"'The Rights of Women, what are they?
The Right to labour, love, and pray;
The Right to weep with those that weep,
The Right to wake when others sleep.

"'The Right to dry the falling tear,
The Right to quell the rising fear;
The Right to smooth the brow of care,
And whisper comfort in despair.

"'The Right to watch the parting breath,
To soothe and cheer the bed of death;
The Right, when earthly hopes all fail,
To point to that within the veil.

"'The Right the wanderer to reclaim,
And win the lost from paths of shame
The Right to comfort and to bless
The widow and the fatherless.

"'The Right the intellect to train,
And guide the soul to noble aim;
Teach it to rise above earth's toys
And wing its flight to heavenly joys.

'"The Right to live for those we love,
The Right to die, that love to prove;
The Right to brighten earthly homes
With pleasant smiles and gentle tones.

"'Are these thy Rights? Then use them well;
Their holy influence none can tell.
If these are thine, why ask for more?
Thou hast enough to answer for.

"'Are these thy Rights? Then murmur not
That woman's mission is thy lot;
Improve the talents God has given;
Life's duties done, thy rest in heaven.'"

"You must indeed have a high opinion of me if you think I come up to these beautiful lines. I should like to learn them very much," said Celitia.

"I will write them out for you with pleasure," said Mr. Long. "By-the-by, Lord Tara wishes to come with me to the cathedral service here to-morrow morning. Will you come, too? In my wandering life I am not often able to go to a good church service, and it always helps one so much."

"I intended to go there to-morrow—I shall like it very much," said Celitia.

Meanwhile Tara had been visiting one or two shops in Calcutta on his own account. He went to Hamilton's, where he chose the tiniest wedding-ring they had in stock, of pure Indian gold; also a triple hoop-ring of diamonds, rubies and sapphires, of the same size. Then he bought a gold porte-bonheur bracelet with four emeralds, as a parting gift to Celitia. He thought green

would suit her fair complexion. He saw a beautiful tiara of Indian sapphires which would be becoming to Lady Tara by-and-by, if all went well. He also bought a rose of pale rubies with diamond dewdrops which took his fancy.

He felt a curious elation, and yet dreaded to awake as from a happy dream to the staid realities of life.

He went for an hour to the Eden Gardens, and there he met Celitia with Mr. Long.

They, too, seemed happier than usual; he had never seen Mr. Long look so animated. Celitia was radiant.

CHAPTER XXVII

TARA AND KAMALA IN A BOAT

BEFORE Celitia left for Cuttack on Tuesday evening she had become engaged to Mr. Long, but it was arranged that they should not be married for a few months—they both had so much to do. Celitia was greatly pleased with Lord Tara's kind remembrance of her, and so was Mr. Long.

The Raja's family party, including Tara, started by evening mail to Cuttack at eleven o'clock. It was only seven hours' journey from Calcutta.

They retired early. It was a dark night; there was nothing to see. Rain fell in torrents; it was a real tropical downpour, with blinding flashes of lightning amidst the roar of thunder. It was the first great storm of an Indian monsoon. At last Tara went to sleep for a while; he did not know how long. He awoke suddenly; the train was not moving. The Raja and Mohan Lal were not in the carriage; they had gone to look after the ladies.

Tara got up and looked out of the window. A man in uniform with a bull's-eye lantern was walking about. There was no platform.

"A river in flood—bridge washed away," said he to Tara.

"What are you going to do?"

"Oh, we're used to this sort of thing in the rainy season," answered the guard. "It was lucky the train was not on the bridge when it was washed away."

Tara remembered that Mr. Long had told him of a narrow escape he had had a few years ago from a similar disaster. He was travelling from Madras to Bombay when the express fell into a river, as a bridge with the signaller had been washed away. A Hindu cowherd had picked up Mr. Long thirteen miles away, clinging to a coir mattress that had floated down the stream.

The present breakdown had happened in an out-of-the-way place. Only one small native boat, a dinghi, was available. The railway authorities decided to let the first-class passengers cross in the dinghi. On the other side of the river another train would be in readiness to take them to Cuttack. Time was of no value to third-class passengers; they must wait until the railway company could arrange for the transhipment of large numbers.

Anyhow, everybody had to wait till it was light. It was four o'clock in the morning.

It was the sacred Baitarni that was in flood and had washed away the bridge.

The Rani Dowager was glad of the occurrence. She did not like the idea of bridging a holy stream for trains to pass over it; it was a sort of desecration. Why should anyone deprive a holy river of its independence? She felt quite pleased that the sacred stream had asserted its freedom by washing away the bridge. Every Hindu pilgrim in that train was of the same opinion. They did not mind the trouble of crossing the river in boats. They approved of the accident.

Soon the sky cleared. A dinghi is a very small boat; in addition to the boatman, only one could sit in it. Another, if he knew how to balance himself in a turbulent stream, might stand.

Who was to go first?

Mohan Lal decided that Lord Tara would be the most suitable person to take charge of Rani Kamala, who could not swim, so he said:

"Lord Tara, can you swim well?" knowing full well that he could, for he had talked to Mohan about swimming-matches at home.

"I can keep myself afloat," said Tara modestly.

"Then, will you look after Rani Kamala? There must be one good swimmer in the boat in case of accident," said Mohan, looking at Partab Singh, who gave an approving nod.

Tara's look was full of gratitude to Lord [illegible]

At last he was allowed to touch the hand of Kamala as he helped her into the boat. It was rocking about in a very uncomfortable way.

"I shall take the Rani and Kishen myself as soon as the boat comes back. Lord Tara or I will return for the Rani Dowager. You must look after yourself," said the Raja to Mohan Lal.

All assembled watched with anxiety the little craft tossed upon the turbulent waves.

The Baitarni is usually a very small stream; but when an Indian river is flooded, the small stream is quite lost to view.

The boat reached the opposite bank, and Tara got out cautiously to assist Kamala to land. Her foot slipped on the slimy edge of the boat, and in another moment she would have fallen into the foaming river had not Tara, seeing the danger, held her firmly in his arms. He waded through the mud with her a few yards, and then placed her on the sloping bank of the river, carefully wrapping her in the Cashmere shawl she had thrown over her shoulders, and knelt down by her side. They were too happy for words.

The boat went back to fetch Ram Singh. He and the Rani came over safely, and then Tara, rousing himself to a sense of duty, returned in it to fetch the Rani Dowager.

She was very grateful to him for the care he took of an old lady like her. He was much nicer than any Englishman she had ever heard

of. She forgot that to him she was Kamala's grandmother.

The small party all took refuge in a hut by the wayside. Mohan Lal brought Sukhdeo over with him in the boat—he was useful in an emergency. He prepared hot milk as refreshment for the travellers while the train was being got ready.

Tara and Kamala did not mind the delay. It gave them time to see more of each other. How happy they both were!

When the train was ready, the Raja's wife and his mother both offered their hands to Tara. He kissed their hands. Kamala put out her little hand to him and said "Good-bye."

During the rest of the journey she thought of her mother, and of the promise given to her in the dream. At the shrine of Kalighat, too, the priest had foretold to her a bright and happy married life. She felt that she could give the lotus garland to Tara—and to him only!

He, too, felt more assured of his happiness than ever before. She had rested in his strong, protecting arms as if she could love and trust him with herself for ever. He had felt the soft pressure of her slight, delicate form, and the sweet, refined odour of roses that always clung to her hair and dress. At length the train steamed into Cuttack, four hours late.

Mr. Sircar and Mr. Long were anxiously awaiting their arrival, with two carriages in readi-

ness to drive them to the house taken for them during the short stay at Cuttack.

The Raja at once placed the ladies and his son in the first carriage and went with them himself, after a hasty greeting to Mr. Sircar.

"Thank God you are all safe!" said Mr. Long. "It was a fearful storm, and many of the pilgrims have nearly lost their lives in trying to cross the river. The hospital is full of poor women who have fallen by the wayside after a long and weary march. How providential it was that we came on first, or we should not have been here in time to help."

"The first thing is to go under cover, I think," said Mr. Sircar; "we can return thanks for mercies received when we have rested. Lord Tara looks as happy as if he hadn't a wish in this world ungratified."

"I shall be very glad of a little rest too," said Tara.

"The best thing you can do is to take a real Hindu bath—it is much more refreshing than an Englishman's tub, both to mind and body—with plenty of our sandal-soap, which all the insects hate; but put on your Rajput dress at once, before you appear in public. India is not at all in a loyal state of mind towards the ruling powers at this particular moment—signs of unrest everywhere. Everyone seems to have a grievance—some real, some imaginary."

"Perhaps I could bring the matters forward in

Parliament next session. I could say what I had seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears," said Tara. "But I hope it may all be put right before then."

"I fear not—it is so difficult to remedy those things," said Sircar.

"Harvey told me the same—he said nothing was more difficult than to remedy a grievance suffered at the hands of the meanest official in Government employ."

Tara looked remarkably well in his Hindu dress, which Bhima had prepared for his arrival. It was not a state costume, but the ordinary dress worn by a Rajput gentleman when travelling. He had become much tanned during his Indian sojourn, and might easily have passed for a Rajput.

Mr. Long congratulated him on his appearance.

"It is one of the most becoming dresses for a man I know of," said Mr. Long. "I have often wished I could wear it myself; but I must say the people are very kind to me, even at this time, when they are greatly irritated. There was a time when an Englishman's word of honour, to say nothing of solemn State obligations, was implicitly trusted. Can we say it is so still?"

The Raja came in to see Tara, bringing with him his friend the Rája of Jagannath, a charming young man, who spoke English. He had come all the way from Puri to personally welcome the

Englishman who cared for India so much. He told Tara that he was anxious to return to Jagannath that evening, for he had to take part in the Festival in his official capacity as "sweeper of the holy temple," which had been held by his family centuries before India had become a conquered country. He told how a former Raja, an ancestor of his, named Purushottama Deva, had been refused the hand of the Princess of Conjevaram on the ground of the Orissa dynasty holding the hereditary office of sweeper to the Lord Jagannath. Purushottama indignantly sent his Prime Minister with an army into the southern country to avenge the insult, and the Princess was brought forth at the ensuing great Festival of Jagannath, and presented to the King while he was publicly performing his lowly office before the god.

The marriage immediately followed.

The present Raja of Jagannath was the fifteenth of the line of reigning Princes since the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE CROCODILE LORD

It was arranged that after a day and a night's stay at Cuttack the Raja's party should start early on Thursday morning for the four days' journey to Jagannath. The heavy storm had cooled the air and made it possible to travel by day, whereas the nights were dark, and the roads in some places heavy from the rainfall, so that the elephants could choose their path more conveniently by daylight. The immense number of pilgrims on foot along the same route also had to be considered. The bullock-carts and other vehicles conveying the tents, baggage, and attendants, consisting of about two hundred retainers from Hindupore, all bound on the same sacred pilgrimage, went on a few hours in advance to prepare for the encampment at night. The ladies travelled in State palanquins during the early part of the day, and on the Rani Dowager's Sultan during the cooler hours of the late afternoon.

The Raja rode the next elephant, attended by

Mohan Lal, and Tara, at his own request, was accompanied on the third elephant by Mr. Sircar, who could tell him everything he most wished to know.

During the previous day Tara and Sircar had visited together some of the most sacred spots in the immediate vicinity of Cuttack, chiefly on the Assia range of hills—Alamgir, with a Mahomedan mosque 2,500 feet above the surrounding country, where every morning and every evening the Hindus as well as the Mahomedans around offer homage at the shrine; the Amravati Peak, celebrated for the two very beautiful images of the goddess Indrani cut out of slate-stone; also the Elephant Cave at Naltigiri, and Udayagiri, with two large figures of Buddha and many Buddhist ruins. Orissa has for more than two thousand years been the Holy Land of the Hindu religion, the home on earth of every divinity that has become incarnate in human form—the scene of the successive incarnations of Brahman faith, concentrated in the form of Jagannath, the Lord of the World.

On the second day's journey Tara was struck by an extraordinary assemblage of people under a banyan-tree.

"Are those pilgrims, too? what are they doing?" asked Tara.

"It is the crowd around a famous astrologer —some people are consulting him," replied Sircar.

"Most people in India believe in astrologers I think?" said Tara.

"Well, if there are a dozen 'scientific palmists' in Regent Street, why should there not be astrologers in India?"

"But only women go to those palmists as a rule," said Tara.

"If you watch the crowd under the banyan-tree, you will see that nine out of ten of them are women. Women live on hope—palmists and astrologers save them from giving way to despair."

"So you, too, believe in astrology, Mr. Sircar?" said Tara, in surprise.

"It is better to believe in astrology than to give way to despair," remarked Mr. Sircar. "The much-abused astrologer has saved the Eastern people from feeling the weariness of life that drives over five hundred wretched beings mad every year in London alone. That the Hindu is superstitious has become an established fact in the West; but perhaps there is a truer philosophy in superstition than in the materialism that characterizes Western civilization, with its unsatisfying hollowness and glitter. Your diversion of theatricals is exciting; ours of astrology is soothing."

"There is a great deal in what you say—no doubt it is so," said Tara.

He had hardly finished speaking when he noticed Jamuna Bai's elephant stop near the astrologer.

Lord Tara felt very curious to see a Hindu astrologer at work.

"Would there be any objection to my being present at the consultation?" asked Tara.

"None whatever," answered Sircar. "You are in Hindu dress, which suits you wonderfully well, by the way. I could smuggle you into a temple."

Both got down from the elephant and mixed in the crowd that surrounded Vishnu Pandit, the famous astrologer of Benares.

Vishnu Pandit's family had been associated with astrology for centuries. One of his ancestors was "Royal Astrologer" to the Maharaja of Bhartpore in 1757, when the British won the Battle of Plassey. In that year there was general consternation among the Rajas. The Maharaja of Bhartpore had implicit faith in astrology. He asked Vishnu Pandit whether there was any necessity to enlist more troops to fight the British. The expert astrologer said: "Bhartpore can only be taken by a kumbhir," which in the language of the Hindu means a crocodile. "Surely the English are not crocodiles!" argued the ruler of Bhartpore; therefore, he was quite safe. His son and grandson argued in the same way. In 1805 Bhartpore resisted Lord Lake's four attempts to storm it. The astrologer was dead, but his descendants pinned their faith to the "crocodile." "None but a crocodile shall ever take Bhartpore," rang the

astrologer's prophecy throughout India. People from distant parts of India went to consult Vishnu Pandit—a name since adopted by the eldest sons of the family, for did not the oracle save a vast amount of money and trouble in unnecessary fortifications?

This gave a tremendous impetus to astrology. In 1826 the British sent a message to the Maharaja of Bhartpore to surrender. The message was in English. It was translated for the Maharaja of Bhartpore.

The signature read: "Kumbhir Mir," which, in Indian parlance, meant, "the Crocodile Lord."

The State officials were paralyzed by fear. At last the fatal crocodile! The news spread like wild-fire among the Raja's troops. At last the astrologer's prophecy had come true! The British took possession of the Bhartpore Fort. The General who captured Bhartpore was Combermere, which name, written in Hindustani, read "Kumbhir Mir"—"the Crocodile Lord." History does not say whether Lord Combermere had any idea that the capture of Bhartpore was not due to his military tactics, but to the peculiarity of his name.

Astrology was vindicated; it rose higher in popular estimation. The name Vishnu Pandit became a household word. Therefore, thirty years later, in 1857, the mutineers consulted Vishnu Pandit before they rose in open rebellion.

Nana Sahib, the notorious rebel of Cawnpore,

opened the Mutiny campaign after consulting Vishnu Pandit's father. Nana killed the first Englishman three seconds after the time fixed by the eminent oracle. On account of this inaccuracy the English were not turned bag and baggage out of India—was the explanation Vishnu gave to his followers.

People in every country have at some time or other believed in astrology. Louis XI. and Francis I. of France, as well as the Emperor Charles V., constantly consulted astrologers. At the birth of Louis XIV. an astrologer cast his nativity. Luther's horoscope was drawn up. Kepler's predictions are well known. Napoleon Bonaparte was credited with special faith in astrology; so was Napoleon III., who believed implicitly in his star. Milton, Shakespeare, and Dante are full of references to planetary influences. Swift's attack on Partridge did not give a death-blow to astrology in England. It thrives under various names. Only a few years since a talisman, calculated upon the year and day of birth, was discovered by an Englishman of mathematical tastes, and warmly taken up by a leading firm of Court jewellers in London. Our friend John Chinaman invented astrology three thousand years ago. It soothed the Hindu. The grateful Hindu in return sent opium to the Chinaman to soothe him. And now a wise Government has told the grateful Hindu not to send soothing opium to the Chinaman. The Hindu finds his

own astrology, so the Chinaman must find his own opium! A very equitable arrangement, no doubt, but has it really pleased the Hindu or the Chinaman?

There were two astrologers under the banyan-tree, one Hindu and the other Mahomedan!

The prophet of Arabia denounced astrology as "humbug." So did he denounce wine. But Mahomedan Persia is noted for its wines, and the Mahomedan Panjab sends out Ramal-walla—Mahomedan astrologers—by the score to Hindu shrines.

The Hindu and Mahomedan astrologers sat under the shade of the same tree. The Ramal-walla threw dice and referred to his books for results.

The Hindu is famous for mental calculation. Some Hindu students have puzzled English professors by solving a quadratic equation or expanding a binomial expression, without paper and pencil, and have distinguished themselves at Cambridge as wranglers.

Vishnu Pandit did not refer to any books. To satisfy his female clients he kept by his side a large bundle marked "Bhrigu Sanhita." Mr. Sircar doubted much whether the bundle contained the Hindu *magnum opus* in astrology. The work is ascribed to the great Hindu philosopher Saint Bhrigu. It contains twelve thousand foolscap pages of closely written matter. It is much larger than the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" put together.

His two disciples, Rahu and Ketu (the Dragon's Head and Tail), were busily engaged in touting for lady clients. If a mere man came to know his future, the Pandit was too busy to attend to him, but Ketu assured him that if he came with his wife or daughter the Pandit would be glad to see him. The Hindu astrologer in India, like Madame Douncette in Regent Street, knows that astrology can only be properly understood by the keen perception of the feminine mind.

"Man's imagination is too limited. Woman's intuition is in her favour," remarked Vishnu Pandit.

Vishnu Pandit's fee was elastic, like that of the London dentist. It was a case of personal equation.

The London dentist, moreover, does not belong to the priestly class. The astrologer did, which gave him a better position. The great French sceptic Comte admitted the necessity of the sacerdotal class for the expansion of the intellect.

Superstition feeds cheerfulness, which depends upon having beliefs.

Perhaps for this reason John Chinaman took to astrology. He wants to feel happy—he tries astrology and opium alternately. A belief in Fate enables the Oriental to bear every change of fortune without attracting the attention of anyone.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE ASTROLOGER AT WORK

JAMUNA BAI sat by the side of Vishnu Pandit, with her grand-daughter Sadhu Bai in her arms.

"Mesh, Brish, Mithun, Kark," muttered the Hindu oracle.

These are the Hindu names for Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer, of the Zodiac.

It had taken Vishnu Pandit twelve years to study the science of astrology, and another ten years to acquire the art of applying it effectually to lady clients.

He noticed a long line in the sole of the child's right foot.

"Urdh rekha, a sign of great prosperity, mother," said Vishnu. "Her small hands and feet and her curly hair all denote wealth and happiness," was his assurance to the good old lady.

He had hardly said this when Jamuna Bai felt a twitching sensation on her left eyelid.

"What could that be?" she asked Rahu, who sat fanning her.

"Twitching of the eyelid for a lady is good luck; for a man, misery," was the prompt answer from Rahu.

"Mother, are you breathing by the left nostril?" asked Ketu, as he suggested her pressing her right thumb to her right nostril.

She did it. Of course she was breathing through the left nostril. How wonderful! If the disciples were so clever, what must the great astrologer be?

The disciples justified their names—"Head and Tail of the Dragon."

"Will you cast a horoscope for Sadhu Bai?" requested her grandmother. She was born at 10.49 a.m. the eighth of Baisakh."

The eighth day of the Hindu month of Baisakh that year was the birthday of the Hindu god Rama. The astrologer remembered the day of the week and the phase of the moon. He took his reed pen and a sheet of hand-made paper. He made the "Janma Kundali"—the nativity.

"I see she was born on a Monday. She will be good-tempered and prosperous," said Vishnu.

"How true!" observed Jamuna Bai's friends.

"She was born under the star Bisakha (Libra). She should not marry anyone with a younger brother—that would bring misfortune."

"Kishen Singh has no younger brother," whispered Jamuna Bai to her daughter-in-law.

"Brihaspati kendrasthita" (Jupiter propitious), muttered Vishnu Pandit. "Not a single bad

day in her life. She will have as many rupees as there are leaves on this banyan-tree," said he reassuringly.

"So said the Bargad Bairagi, the hermit of the banyan-tree at Hindupore," replied the elderly dame with great delight.

"Shani can never touch her," was the next statement of the oracle.

Shani is the worrying god of the Hindu—all human miseries are due to him.

"You are a good girl to be the mother of such a lucky child," said Jamuna to her daughter-in-law. She felt sorry that she had ever suggested a second wife to her son.

"What a fortunate baby! She will be on the throne before she is twenty," was the next statement of the astrologer.

Hardly had he uttered the sentence when there was a jingle of coin heard. Jamuna Bai poured out a handful of ashrafis (gold coin). She was in ecstasies. The astrologer had endorsed what the Bairagi of Hindupore had predicted.

She felt happier than a solicitor when he finds two rulings of the Privy Council in his favour in a case in which (against the law of Champerty) he had quietly purchased a property under litigation.

"She was a Queen in her previous life, but not having been generous to the Court Astrologer, she was born again as an ordinary baby—not as

a Princess," said Vishnu Pandit, without raising his eyes from the horoscope.

"It is all Karma," said Jamuna Bai, looking sad.

The law of Karma is the cardinal faith of seven hundred millions of Buddhists and Hindus. It means retribution. "As you sow, so you will reap." If you do good in this life, you will fare well in your next life. Both Hindus and Buddhists believe in the transmigration of the soul; otherwise they could not understand why one should be lucky and another unlucky, for God is just.

"But the baby will marry a handsome young man—the *crème de la crème* of Rajput aristocracy. She will be a Princess."

All the women greeted Jamuna Bai when they heard the predictions of Vishnu Pandit.

The baby was overwhelmed with attention.

One said: "What a nice forehead she has! We don't require Vishnu Pandit to tell us that she will be a Queen."

Another said: "She has such fine eyes, too! Only goddesses have such lovely eyes! She must be either a Rani or a goddess; she is too perfect for an ordinary mortal."

Jamuna Bai was delighted. During the last few months of the baby's existence she had never noticed all these good omens. She invited all the ladies to "come and visit the temple with her," which in Hindu parlance means an excellent

vegetable luncheon, such as even Eustace Miles' restaurant at Charing Cross could not provide.

Jamuna Bai killed two birds with one stone. She played to the gallery, and secured a following which would give her a status at Jagannath shrine, for they were all going there.

But what she most wanted was a quiet minute with the astrologer. So she asked her daughter-in-law to take Sadhu Bai and the ladies to her camp. She would follow immediately.

Rahu and Ketu dispersed the crowd at once. They themselves went to the Mahomedan astrologer, who sat about twenty yards away, to make friendly inquiries about his "business," as city lawyers do when they meet in the Bakerloo Tube.

Vishnu Pandit and Jamuna Bai were quite alone. She blushed over head and ears.

The astrologer, who had surveyed womankind fourteen years, knew that luck was in his way. He said: "Mother, to me you may confide your secrets."

Jamuna Bai made the astrologer touch a gold coin and swear secrecy on it.

An oath on gold is as binding to a professional man as the holy water of the Ganges is to a religious Hindu.

She then asked with downcast eyes whether she would be happy if she married again.

The astrologer was shocked. Fancy a high-caste widow thinking of such a thing! He

cursed the missionaries for putting such an idea into the head of an elderly dame. That there were no missionaries in the case the astrologer could not believe.

But he was a business man. In business sentiment does not pay. Any definite answer in the affirmative or the negative meant the end of that business. In a long case the brilliant advocate gets "refreshers." It is the same with an astrologer of reputation.

So he said: "Mother, has the lucky man whom you think of marrying got a mole on his upper lip? On that will depend my calculation."

Now old Mohan Lal's snow-white moustache covered his upper lip. So far Jamuna had had no opportunity of observing it closely.

"I don't know," she said faintly.

"You have beautiful dimples," said Vishnu gallantly. "Dimples mean good luck. You are sure to bring good luck to him. But I wish I knew if he had a mole on his upper lip! Unless he has, I fear he will not bring good luck to you. I would not advise you to run the risk."

Jamuna gave Vishnu another handful of ashrafis, and hastened away.

CHAPTER XXX

MURDER OF SUPERINTENDENT HUNT

SUPERINTENDENT CHARLES HUNT and his assistant, Hashmat Khan, were following closely on the Raja's steps on the way to Jagannath.

Although neither of them was a Hindu, they were supposed to be competent to supply the Imperial Government with accurate information about everything that took place in a Hindu shrine.

Mr. Hunt was watching Lord Tara very closely, and making frequent entries in his secret diary of the movements of an Irish nobleman travelling in disguise in the suite of a Raja. He suspected him of being a Fenian head-centre, who was going to Jagannath to preach Home Rule to the assembled pilgrims there.

When Tara and Mr. Sircar joined the crowd surrounding the astrologer Hunt was standing near. When the crowd dispersed Hunt seated himself under a mango-tree near the roadside, haranguing a group of gaping Hindu pilgrims, asserting his importance in a harsh, arrogant

tone. His simple listeners were disgusted with the airs he gave himself.

He said, as he dangled his gold-mounted cane that he was there on behalf of the British Government to see that the pilgrims behaved themselves properly, and did not get up any disturbances of the public peace. Presently an elderly Hindu woman passed by. She looked several times at Mr. Hunt while she went along slowly, as if wearied from a long journey. This was too much for him. How dare a shabby native woman stare at a gentleman! He raised his cane to strike her—she had just recognized his voice.

"Charlie!" cried the poor woman. She was Mr. Charles Hunt's mother, Dukhia — now neither gay nor giddy. Her Mahomedan lover had deserted her long ago, as her English lover had done. She had at last determined to turn over a new leaf, and was going on pilgrimage to Jagannath to pray for the forgiveness of her sins.

She had not seen her son for years, but she had often heard of him, and was glad he was getting on in the world. On the way to Jagannath she heard that Charles Hunt was the police-officer the pilgrims dreaded the most. Should she meet her son? A mother always cares for her son, and Hunt was Dukhia's only child.

Her cheeks flushed as she thought of Colonel

Gilchrist's veranda and the birth of Charles. As he grew up he became very much like his father; when, therefore, Dukhia looked at him she easily recognized him. Mr. Hunt recognized the voice, and knew it was his mother. But he was not going to let his assistant, Hashmat Khan, know that he was the son of the poor Hindu woman. For the last ten years he had given out to his assistant that his mother was an Irish lady, daughter of a former Admiral of the Channel Fleet, and now an impertinent native woman addressed him as "Charlie." He hit her with the cane in his hand. She cried. Several pilgrims came to her aid. The matter became serious, so Hunt jumped on his horse and bolted. Hashmat Khan hated Hunt—why should he not tell the infuriated pilgrims where Hunt lodged? He was anxious to know who Dukhia was, to address the mighty Mr. Hunt as "Charlie."

So he squatted on the grass with the pilgrims, and consoled Dukhia for Mr. Hunt's arrogance,

"As the crow is worst among birds and the ass worst among quadrupeds, so is the half-caste worst among human beings," said Hashmat Khan.

This pleased the Hindu pilgrims immensely.

The Hindu and the Mahomedan may not always like each other, but in their hatred for the Eurasian they always agree.

A Hindu pilgrim said: "The venom of a snake is in the fangs, of a scorpion in the tail, but of a mongrel all over his body."

"As flies look for ulcers, a half-caste rascal looks for the helpless women to insult," remarked a second pilgrim.

They all pressed Dukhia to say how she knew Mr. Hunt. Dukhia was not going to repeat her past history to such country folk. She said she was maid to Mr. Hunt's mother.

Hashmat Khan was satisfied. Not so the Hindu pilgrims.

"You can no more understand the heart of woman than a dream," observed one of the pilgrims.

Soon a crowd gathered. They were all enraged to hear that a Kerani (half-caste) policeman had caned an innocent Hindu woman.

"Where is the rascal?" cried the infuriated mob. Hashmat Khan was afraid of them. Why shouldn't he save himself by pointing out Hunt's abode? Besides, if anything happened to Hunt, Hashmat was bound to get promotion; so, actuated by dual motives, he said: "Mr. Hunt lives just behind the mango tope."

They all rushed there. Hashmat Khan did not go with them. If anything happened to Hunt, he was anxious to prove an alibi. The angry crowd had not seen Hunt, so they took Dukhia with them to point him out. Dukhia was in a terrible dilemma. She dared not say that Hunt

was her son, nor could she point out her own son to be killed.

She thought she would enter Hunt's room and whisper in his ear to run for his life.

Hunt had galloped home, and was devising means to save his life. He knew what an infuriated mob meant. He felt a sense of impending disaster. Had he a presentiment of coming doom?

There was a knock at the door. He sprang to his feet with a demoniac laugh. It was his mother, Dukhia. Her tears blinded her; she wiped her streaming eyes, and said: "Charlie, run for your life! the pilgrims are coming to attack you."

Hunt's hope of escape vanished. His pride was aroused. He aimed his revolver at the crowd. But what can stop a national demonstration? He had outraged their religious zeal.

Before Hunt could pull the trigger of his revolver the crowd lifted him up bodily. Within a few yards there was a disused well. Hunt, revolver still in hand, was thrown violently down the well. It was the tragic end of a career marked only by mean passion and petty thoughts. Dukhia alone wept over the ruin brought by her miserable son upon his own head.

The crowd dispersed. Every one of them was a Hindu. They swore to keep the secret.

About an hour afterwards a pilgrim came and sat on the edge of the well. There was nothing

in his countenance to show that he had taken any part in the murder of Hunt.

His look was calm and placid, with nothing sinister in it. He began smoking. It was not the fragrant weed as used in this country. It was a preparation—or, rather, a concoction—of tobacco with molasses and sweet herbs to give it an artificial fragrance to the Indian sense of smell which does not appeal to English olfactory nerves. He was smoking it in a hookah, or ornamental wooden pipe about ten inches long, fixed on a cocoanut-shell. This wooden pipe holds an earthenware cup, called a chilam. In this the tobacco is placed under lighted charcoal. There is another hole in the cocoanut-shell, to which is attached a pipe made of fresh green mango leaves. The cocoanut-shell is filled with cold water, through which the smoke passes and reaches the smoker's lips through the pipe made of leaves. This is the poor man's smoking apparatus. Of course, the rich cover the cocoanut-shell with solid silver or gold plate, according to their means.

Hashmat Khan soon learned what had happened. He went to the spot and held a panchayat (an inquest). Five respectable citizens were satisfied it was a pure accident. "Mr. Hunt was walking near the side of the well when he slipped and fell into it," swore the pilgrim, smoking all the time. Hashmat Khan found two more witnesses to support the smoking pilgrim.

In fact, they had warned Hunt, but he would not listen to them.

The pilgrims presented a purse to Hashmat Khan for the wonderful manipulation of the "little incident."

Hashmat Khan did not get Hunt's post—that was reserved for Englishmen. He was satisfied with a promotion of fifty rupees per month.

"Not bad," thought Hashmat Khan to himself.

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CHAPTER XXXI

MARRIAGE OF TARA AND KAMALA

THE Raja's party arrived at Jagannath on the eve of the great Car Festival, which lasts three days.

Mr. Long and Father Browne were already there, and had been ministering to the wants of many poor pilgrims.

Rani Kamala, too, had taken pity on a young wife whose baby had been born at Cuttack, and placed her with the child and her widowed mother, both on pilgrimage from distant Poona, in one of the palanquins.

The Raja's encampment was not far from the Lion's Gate of the Temple, and in the evening Tara went with Mr. Sircar as far as the Garden House, where the sacred images are annually taken, that have survived the countless vicissitudes of more than forty generations, and still command the veneration of their worshippers as emblems of the divine attributes of their Supreme God. The Brahmans' houses, scattered near the precincts of the holy places, had most of them

well-cultivated gardens, filled with choice flowers for the services of the temple, and Tara was presented with some beautiful roses by one of the priests who was known to Mr. Sircar.

He determined to offer them to Kamala on his return, and met her as she was distributing food and clothing to poor pilgrims around her tent. She accepted the roses with a smile and a blush, and placed one in her beautiful hair as she gave him her hand. He longed to kiss the sweet tiny hands, but had not courage to venture so far. When she took part in the procession the following day, Tara saw with delight that she was wearing his roses.

After the service in the temple, at which only the initiated could be present, the gorgeous car containing the sacred images, decorated lavishly with simple, innocent offerings of fruit and flowers, was conveyed to the Garden House, about a mile away, where it was to rest until the following day.

The golden tooth of Buddha, preserved for over two thousand years in memory of that noble incarnation of the Divine Presence, is also taken to a distant shrine on the following day.

It was a revelation to Tara to watch the wonderful reverence shown by the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims of every class, mostly women, in that solemn act of devotion, humbly and thankfully receiving the sacramental rice, freely distributed to all. The red earthenware

pots containing this consecrated food are never used again, and thousands of the pots are daily thrown aside at every festival.

It recalled the enthusiasm of long-past ages, when the same fervent religious zeal prompted Christians to sacrifice every earthly tie and blessing to recover the sacred land once trodden by their God.

In India this enthusiasm has never died, and has preserved to it the hallowed memories and traditions of thousands of years.

The Festival was over, and on the following morning Tara met Kamala as she was returning from one of the sacred tanks. She had been gathering lotus-flowers growing on the banks of the lake, and hurried away, blushing deeply as he gave his hand in greeting.

He told Mr. Sircar what he had seen. He smiled and said: "Lord Tara, I suppose it is the answer you wish for—the marriage garland."

"What do you mean, Mr. Sircar?"

"Did you never hear that the lotus garland is given by a maiden who accepts a lover as a symbol of marriage?"

"I did not know this," said Tara, confused. "Do you think it can be for me?"

"I am quite sure that Rani Kamala does not intend it to be for anyone else, so you must keep out of her way unless you wish to marry her," said Sircar, with a mischievous smile.

"It is the dearest wish of my heart to marry

her—it is like the wooing of a Queen regnant, who gives her bouquet to her chosen lover."

"I think you had better ask Mr. Long to hold himself in readiness for the happy event. I will find a priest of our faith for you, if you like. By the way, you may want a wedding-ring."

"That I have," said Tara, blushing. "Harvey advised me to be prepared, if all went well."

Sircar laughed heartily. "Mr. Harvey knew more about our customs than you do, Lord Tara. He would have given much for this wedding garland himself."

"I know. He is the noblest fellow in the world," said Tara.

"But I forgot. You must give her a tiny iron bangle, too; I will get that for you. To-day is Rani Kamala's birthday. She has gone to the sacred tank to offer lotus-flowers to the gods," said Sircar, as he left Tara.

Tara followed the direction pointed out, by the ghat—a lovely flight of marble steps. Tara did not like to disturb her. He stood behind a bamboo bush about fifty feet away. There was a gale which made the young bamboos swing, so that they touched the water of the sacred tank.

Tara watched Kamala carefully. Facing the sun, she folded her hands. She then muttered something and threw some lotus-flowers into the water. The wind carried the flowers towards the bamboo bush.

Tara was anxious to gather the flowers.

"India is a land of symbols; who knows what the flowers may mean?" said Tara to himself. He bent a young bamboo, and, as the bank was very slippery and steep, at some personal risk he gathered all the lotus-flowers. He counted them carefully. There were seventeen. He pulled out his pocket-handkerchief and wiped them dry. He then put them on his turban and walked to the ghat. He met Rani Kamala with a lotus garland in her hand.

"Tell me, do you wish for this?" she said timidly, raising her eyes to his—they were full of tears.

He bent down gently, and pressed a fervent kiss upon her pure brow. "Mine for ever, sweet Lotus Queen!"

Kamala and Tara were both very simple in their ways. They did not want a pompous wedding. Besides, there was no time to make grand preparations.

After Kamala had placed the lotus garland round Tara's neck, Mohan consulted the astrologer, who said that that very day was the most auspicious day in the year. The next morning Akal (an unlucky time) would begin, and that would last for ninety days.

So Mohan had no alternative but to let the religious ceremony be performed that very day, and let the marriage festivities be reserved for Hindupore. Everyone agreed with Mohan's views, and so it was to be.

It was a lovely evening. There had been no rain, and the ground was dry. There was a cool, refreshing breeze.

The wedding took place in the open air, under the canopy of the starry heavens. Thousands of fire-flies lighted up the trees all round.

It was an intermarriage. No Rajput Princess had ever married an Englishman before. Notwithstanding the encouragement of Mohan Lal and Sircar, and his own strong regard for Tara, Raja Ram Singh looked anxious. An alliance with the orthodox Hindu family of Jamuna Bai might be all right, but what would the Brahmans of Benares say to this? Mohan and Jamuna Bai, who had seen much of each other at Jagannath, put their heads together, and the solution they arrived at was to induce the great astrologer Vishnu Pandit to act as officiating priest. That would silence all Hindu India.

Another hour, and the auspicious moment would be gone.

So Tara, in his Rajput dress, with Kamala on his left, stood waiting for the religious ceremony that was to make them man and wife.

Mr. Long was ready to perform the Christian marriage service.

As a further precaution, Sircar had brought the Registrar of Civil Marriages to record the fact that a legal marriage did take place.

Mr. Sircar had settled the affair with the astrologer. Vishnu Pandit wanted a handle to

his name, and Sircar had suggested to him that "Hindupore Court Astrologer" would command respect and double his fees.

"Not a bad idea," said the astrologer.

At the appointed time Vishnu Pandit arrived. He was faultlessly dressed as a Hindu priest. On his broad forehead were the sandal-paste marks to denote that he was a Saraswat Brahman. Except the holy tuft of hair (choti) on his head, he was clean-shaven. A silk uttariya covered his body, with a silk dhoti tied round his waist.

He sat on a daïs a foot high covered with red cloth. Four banana plants were at the four corners of the daïs. Two earthen pots, full of holy water of the Ganges, stood in front. The pots were wreathed in garlands of the delicate kamalata (love-creeper)—the rosy-red jasmine-like flower that is said to bloom in Paradise and confer all happiness upon those who breathe its fragrance.

Lord Tara and Rani Kamala Kumari sat together under a canopy of strings of lotus-flowers.

Kamala was simply dressed in a pink silk sari, fastened on the right shoulder with the diamond coronet which Tara had lately given her. The thick soft tresses of her long jet-black hair were wreathed with white roses, and she wore in it the ruby rose, Tara's first gift.

The blush of deep emotion made her counten-

ance more beautiful. Her dark eyes under long lashes beamed with joy and happiness. She looked the very image of Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of prosperity.

Tara looked proudly upon his queenly bride

The priest sprinkled holy water of the Ganges upon them. Then Raja Ram Singh and his little son, Mohan Lal and Guru Swami were standing near, while behind them, at a little distance, were Mr. Long and Mr. Sircar, with the Registrar of Civil Marriages.

Father Browne was busy photographing every little incident by flashlight.

Vishnu Pandit sang the marriage mantra, the hymn of invocation. The hymn enchanted Lord Tara; in turn he admired the lovely figure by his side and the sweet melody of the mantra chanted by the priest, which seemed to flood the senses with a divine harmony. Celestial symphonies floated in the air; the flower canopy above his head appealed to Tara more than the vaulted arches and shadowy aisles of a Gothic church.

The sacred mantra, in its tenderness, pathos, and solemnity, appeared to him more thrilling than any religious music he had ever heard. It made a lasting impression upon his mind, and often recalled to him the happiest moment of his life.

The priest took the hands of Kamala, placed them between those of Tara, and tied them with

a string of flowers. He placed upon her left wrist a tiny iron bangle encrusted with rubies.

They were united for life, for a Hindu marriage knows no divorce.

Mohan Lal came forward, and said:

"Lord Tara, you have to say the Hindu prayer—to pray to the Almighty with your wife. From to-day Kamala Rani is your saha-dharmini," partner in virtue.

"I should like to know the Hindu prayer," said Tara.

Mohan was pleased. He said: "Hinduism realizes the noblest ideas. To the Hindu peace is of more value than the daily bread. We pray for peace—not for ourselves alone, but for the whole world. 'Dyoshanti, prithivo shanti' (Give peace to the world). We pray every morning: 'May all be happy; may all be free from disease; may all be well-to-do; may no one be a dependent on another! Give the world peace!'"

"It is a beautiful daily prayer. I shall always say it," said Tara earnestly.

Mr. Long came forward as Vishnu Pandit, attended by Guru Swami, slowly retired from the daïs, while Tara and Kamala knelt beneath the canopy of lotus-flowers.

Mr. Long read impressively the shortened English service, beginning with the marriage vows, and ending with the prayer of blessing: 'May the Lord mercifully with His favour look

upon you, and so fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace, that ye may so live together in this world, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting. Amen."

Then the record of the marriage was made by the Registrar, as witnessed by Mr. Sircar and Mr. Browne. Tara, with his beloved Kamala clinging to his arm, went away to receive the congratulations of the Raja and his family. Ram Singh was the first to welcome them as they entered the Rani's beautiful tent, which Sukhdeo and Bhima, both devoted to the bride and bridegroom, had wreathed with garlands of roses and kamalata.

"It is a beautiful service, so simple and touching, yet so full of spiritual meaning. I often wish several phrases in our marriage service could be dispensed with. They are rather suggestive of the Tudor period, when it was first drawn up. This is not the missionary conception of Hinduism, is it?" said Mr. Long.

"Neither is what we saw at the Car Festival the missionary idea of Jagannath," replied Father Browne.

"No, our books are full of the blood-curdling atrocities of Jagannath—the most merciful of gods. This innocent Buddhist shrine has for centuries been libelled by ignorant travellers and missionaries, who have never been within fifty miles of it. We come here to 'teach truth to the heathen,' and ourselves write and publish

untruths about them. How can we expect to command their respect?" said Mr. Long sadly.

"What is Buddhism but reformed Hinduism?" said Mr. Sircar. "What is the Church of Jagannath but assimilation of Hinduism and Buddhism? Hindu Imperialism wanted a Church to suit all sects and all castes. It found it in the Church of Jagannath, the only church in the world where a Raja of ancient descent is the sweeper of the sacred precincts. Jagannath, a glorious vision of the Supreme Being, commands the reverential adoration of more than half the population of the British Empire. Over two hundred millions of British subjects obey the spring of the Master Hand at Jagannath."

"That is why it is so impossible to make Christian converts," said Mr. Long. "The religion they already have appeals so strongly to their highest and best instincts."

"I also despair of the high castes ever giving up their faith. After nearly two hundred years or more of missionary propaganda, we have not even one per cent. of population as Christian converts," said Father Browne.

"Are your converts always Christians, even outwardly?" asked Mr. Sircar.

"I am afraid not," said Father Browne. "I spent about a month in Mysore lately. I was surprised to find that our Christian converts

consulted the Brahman astrologer, and actually had the Brahman priest at their marriages."

"What, then, is the use of trying to swell the list of our converts?" said Mr. Long. "It is far better for us to try to make our own people in India truer Christians. Let us have more sympathy for the people of the country. People at home ought to take more interest in India."

"It would be a grand thing for the Empire if there were more missionaries like you," said Mr. Sircar. "India and Anglo-India are two nations without intercourse or sympathy with each other, and yet they have so many interests in common."

"It is too true," said Mr. Long. "The average Anglo-Indian lives completely isolated from the people. Our Saviour told us to love our neighbour as ourselves; how much more, then, should we care for a race committed to our tender and protecting charge as a nation! But a proud bureaucracy teaches them not even to know their neighbour. The Anglo-Indian is perplexed between the two doctrines. He calls himself a Christian, while often disliking his neighbour because he is brown."

Sukhdeo came to say that the Raja was expecting the gentlemen.

CHAPTER XXXII

IS MARRIAGE A LOTTERY?

NEAR the camp of the Raja Ram Singh at Jagannath was the camp of Jamuna Bai. The two hundred picked soldiers of the Indian Army, whose railway fares on the pilgrimage she had paid at the request of the Bairagi of Hindupore, were encamped around her, and attracted considerable attention from the million of pilgrims attending the Car Festival.

Jamuna Bai was a woman of tact and of great determination of character. Since her husband's death she had managed all the affairs of the estate. It was not a very large estate, but there were complicated problems to solve,

She had been the third wife of her husband, but she did not quarrel with the two rival ladies. She believed in homœopathic doses of love-making, that gave her husband time to find out her value. In a short time she became mistress of the house.

She was diplomatic. She made her infant son, Kedar Nath, address the senior wife of her hus-

band as "mother," and was satisfied herself to be called mowsi (mother's sister). That made the "crabbed old thing" friendly. There was soon no one to oppose Jamuna's views in the household; she reigned supreme.

The one man she had most admired was Mohan Lal. She always regretted that her mother had not accepted his advances when she was a girl. Whenever there had been a discussion about politics she always silenced her opponents by saying, "That is Dewan Mohan Lal's policy." Now at last she had met the great man. She felt her power over him. Was it the man that appealed to her, or was it that the name Mohan is the name of the Hindu God of Love? There is much in a name, Shakespeare notwithstanding.

Perhaps the great astrologer might yet confess an error in his calculations, and enable her to marry Mohan Lal! He was not particularly anxious to marry again, although he admired Jamuna. He was rather afraid of public opinion, for he was of high caste, and she was a widow. A woman in love thinks only of love; a man in love has sometimes a grain of sense left.

Only the other day he had remarked to his friend Sircar, who always declared that he owed his whole success in life to a woman's influence, that marriage was, after all, a lottery.

"I beg your pardon! Marriage is never a lottery," replied Sircar cynically. "In a lottery

you draw either a prize or a blank ; in marriage you draw either a life companion or a tormentor —never a blank."

Meanwhile there was gossip about the evening visits of Mohan Lal to Jamuna Bai.

The gossip had reached the ear of the Rani Dowager, and she made up her mind "to make the white moustache of Mohan Lal black"—that is, to take Mohan to task for such strange rumours.

Mohan was sent for by the Dowager. The gay old spark was equal to the occasion.

He arrived with little Sadhu Bai in his arms, together with her horoscope, signed by the great Vishnu Pandit, whose name was a household word throughout India. Old Hindu ladies are more or less versed in astrology. Fifty years ago astrology was a common accomplishment for a Hindu lady of rank.

The Rani Dowager was beginning to look out for a future wife for her grandson Kishen Singh.

At a glance she saw the amount of good luck Sadhu Bai would bring to Hindupore. How good of Mohan Lal to do everything quietly! Why, the Dowager Rani of Benares would snatch away the lucky Sadhu Bai and marry her to her grandson if she had the slightest idea of the happiness awaiting the household into which Sadhu Bai entered as a wife!

Ram Singh's mother cursed the day when she

believed any scandal about innocent Mohan Lal. No man was purer than her son's favourite Minister, and yet people talked—she could not understand why.

She requested Mohan Lal to invite Jamuna Bai to join the Hindupore party at once, and to be her guest at Hindupore.

As Kamala was going to England with her husband, Jamuna Bai might stay in the Hawa Mahal. Kishen Singh and Sadhu Bai would learn to understand each other under the guidance of their respective grandmothers, after the fashion of Hindu courtship. No one could object to a boy of seven and a little girl under two living under the same roof.

Mohan Lal and Jamuna Bai were delighted with the arrangement.

Mohan said that the future Princess of Hindupore had entered her husband's abode at a most auspicious moment; she should not be taken back to her grandmother. It was decided that Jamuna Bai should come and stay that very night as the Rani Dowager's guest.

Jamuna slept that night in a tent made of Cashmere shawls with solid silver poles—grandeur far beyond any she had yet attained. Who could say what good fortune she might be fated to enjoy?

The ruling Princes of Hindupore and Kasi had not been on friendly terms for the last two centuries. Kasi was as notorious for anti-British

feeling as was Hindupore for loyal sympathy with the British Government in India.

Raja Ram Singh's father had fought for British interests during the Mutiny, sword in hand, but now his father's loyal support and services were forgotten. He was a ruling Hindu Prince, and yet liable to slight and insult at the hands of officials in the service of the Imperial Government.

The Prince of Wales, on his return from India, said there was want of more sympathy in the British administration of India. Ram Singh often thought this deficiency of sympathy meant both not yielding to Oriental ways of thinking and making Western experiments upon Eastern minds. The British Government fails to comprehend that the hereditary devotion and reverence of the two hundred millions of Hindus under its rule have been for hundreds of years centred upon their ineradicable faith in their native rulers and priests, and that therefore its influence over the masses of the people depends upon the support and loyalty of the Rajas and high-caste gentlemen whom it is the best policy of a wise and enlightened Government to conciliate. It is for this reason that every care should be taken that the officials appointed as Political Agents to the Rajas in India should be gentlemen by birth and training, remembering the good old Winchester motto, "Manners makyth man." There is no country in the

world where real nobility and high breeding are so fully appreciated and gratefully awarded as in India, but it is the exception rather than the rule to find them there. One of the most unfortunate experiments ever tried in India has been the new class of "gazetted Rajas," created by the Indian Government.

The new Raja may get his coat-of-arms made, may have it on his billiard-table, on the panel of his carriage, on the china he uses when entertaining his English patrons, but yet in the eyes of his own servants he is only a member of the middle class.

The Raja Ram Singh could not object to the decision of his mother to receive the little Sadhu Bai into his family. He, too, believed that the astrologer was infallible; and who could resist Fate?

"I almost wish my mother had not decided this so hastily; it is the first alliance we have ever had with this family. I hope it will always be for the good of our beloved India."

"It is my beloved India, too, now," said Tara. "I hope to spend the best half of my life here. You have given me the greatest blessing on earth, and it will be hard if I can't do some good in return. I shall have to talk it over with Dewan Mohan Lal."

The shawls the Bairagi had refused to accept Jamuna Bai had with her. The hermit had advised her to give them to a brave Hindu

soldier. She decided to give the valuable shawls to the good Sukhdeo Prasad, and said to him as she presented them to him: "If Jagannath-Ji grants life to you and me, you will one day be a Panjhazari of the Hindupore Army."

Sukhdeo's father had been a Panjhazari (commander of five thousand troops) under the King of Oudh. A Panjhazari in British service was beyond his dreams. He felt that he was equal to the responsibility. He touched the feet of Jamuna Bai and said: "Bhagwat Ka icha" (if God pleases).

Just then Mohan Lal came in. Jamuna slightly blushed, and, speaking in a tone of gentle reproach, took him to task for having neglected her.

Sukhdeo saluted Mohan Lal and left the tent.

CHAPTER XXXIII

HINDU-JAPANESE AFFINITY

FATHER BROWNE had taken some very successful photographs of Tara and Kamala at their wedding, and they asked him to let them have copies of the photographs for their friends, so he was busily engaged in printing and mounting them. It was a change from the hard work he did in charge of the Foundlings' Home which he and Mr. Long had together founded in Patna, where they now had more than a hundred children under their care.

Lord Tara had presented them with a thousand rupees for their good work, and promised to become an annual subscriber to it.

Mr. Long was now returning to Cuttack, where he intended to remain until most of the pilgrims to Jagannath had departed to their respective homes. He came to say good-bye to Lord and Lady Tara.

"I shall walk with you to the station," said Tara. "It is not far from here, and the train does not leave for an hour."

As they were leaving the tent together a Japanese pilgrim came forward, and, speaking English, congratulated Lord Tara upon his marriage with so charming a Hindu lady. Such an alliance was more valuable to India and England than a dozen Royal Commissions.

He mentioned that he was once associated with the Nippon Bijutsuin, the Japanese Merton Abbey at Yanaka, a suburb of Tokio.

"Fancy a Japanese gentleman coming to the shrine of Jagannath!" observed Mr. Long.

"It is a sense of nationality as well as religion that brings me here," said the Japanese pilgrim.

"I thought the Japanese were Buddhists," said Mr. Long, surprised.

"It is only another name for the vast synthesis which in India is called Hinduism. The Brahman monk has Hinduized the Buddhism of Japan," was the reply.

Mr. Long was puzzled. Lord Tara listened with great attention; it was new to him.

"The wave of spirituality you will find throughout Japan," said the pilgrim. "Wandering monks have proved beyond doubt that Buddhism, as it exists in Japan to-day, is the Hinduism of Jagannath, and *vice versâ*. The oppressed Hindu directs the thought of distant lands, as does the down-trodden Jew."

"The mighty Himalayas divide the Buddhists from the Hindus," said Mr. Long.

"They do not separate; they only accentuate

the fact that, in spite of the Himalayas, China, Japan, and India form one mighty web. For mental convenience, different names are given to the same faith. Hinduism mirrors the beliefs of all three countries, with their seven hundred millions of inhabitants."

"Japan is a great modern Power," said Tara.

"She is true to the land that civilized her. It was the Indian King Asoka who first sowed the seed of civilization by sending missionaries to preach Buddhism. The Gen dynasty in the fourteenth century introduced Bengal Tantrikism into China. At the dawn of our history we breathed Hindu mythology. Our respectable families say: 'We come of Ama.' What is Ama? 'The land of Rama.'"

"This is all new to me," said Mr. Long. They were all sitting on the grass under a great banyan-tree. An Asiatic seldom opens his mind freely unless he is squatting.

"Do the yellow races believe in Fate, like the Hindus?" asked Tara.

"Fatalism is our creed. Confucius made us fatalists. In many a particular we agree with India. We, like the Hindus, have elaborate ceremonies for everything, from handing a toothpick to committing suicide. The Rajput Johar—the ceremony by which a defeated Hindu King committed suicide—was practised in China. Take our Art: the wall-paintings at Horiuji, in Japan, are the same as those of Ajanta, in India.

You will find as much of Hindu idolism on the banks of the Hoang-Ho as you find on the banks of the Ganges."

"How do you explain this?" said Mr. Long.

"Nagarjuna, the Hindu monk, connected Orissa in thought with China and Japan. He showed us how the 'Bhagavad Gita' of the Hindu was practically an epitome of Northern Buddhism. Japanese scholars by the score studied at the Indian University of Nalanda two centuries before the birth of Christ. Pilgrims do in the East what pamphlets and leaflets do in your country. What is our Pantheon but Hinduism in Japanese garb?" said the pilgrim.

"Still, you are different races," said Mr. Long.

"Our folk-story says: 'China, Japan, and the Sacred Land make a fan. China is the paper, India (the birthplace of Buddha) the radiating sticks, and Japan the handle.' Folk-lore represents the national mind more than all foreign opinion. A day will yet come when this fan will cool the aggressive ardour of the West."

Seven hundred millions under the flag of Japan! Tara could scarcely grasp the idea.

"Nothing is impossible. There is an immense store of latent energy in India and China. It may exhibit force some day," said the Japanese pilgrim.

"Buddhism knows no gods or goddesses," said Mr. Long.

"That is the theory; in practice we have Fudo to represent the Hindu Siva. Like Siva. he has a third eye, the lasso of snakes, and in the form of Kojin he has a garland of human skulls, and, like Siva, sits on a tiger-skin for meditation," said the Japanese pilgrim.

At this moment Mohan Lal and Sircar joined the party. They stood aside, listening with interest to the conversation.

The pilgrim continued: "We have other Hindu gods and goddesses in our Pantheon. The Hindu Kali takes the form of Kariteimo. Two-thirds of our people belong to the Jodo sect, which is really the Vaishnavism of India."

All this was new to Tara. He had read much about Japan, but nothing that pointed out the strong religious tie existing between Japan and India. And religion is everything in the East. The Hindu prizes religious liberty more than any civil blessing that can be conferred upon him by a foreign ruler. The mind of the Hindu peasant cannot conceive abstract ideas; he therefore turns divinity into a concrete idol, and adores the personality of his natural protectors—his god and the Raja!

Some pilgrims passed chanting the mantra of their particular creed.

"I like that Hindu music; it appeals to the heart," said Tara.

"It resembles our Bugaku music; it appeals to me," said the pilgrim.

"So you find many things that appeal to you in India," observed Tara.

"Yes. The Hindu shradh is nothing but the origin of our ancestor-worship that we call Shintoism. India is our Palestine, the birth-place of our lord Buddha, the Holy Land of our most sacred memories."

Tara thought of the Crusades, now a dream of the past. He said: "That must make you love India."

"Japan loves India for the sake of the future, as well as the past. Without the Hindu, Japan cannot attempt the unification of a grand Asiatic empire. India, China, and Japan in one empire would be beyond the dreams of any Western Power. And such a day will come," said the pilgrim, with a confident air.

Mr. Long said thoughtfully: "The East always rules the West. Our Saviour Himself came to us in the East. All noble visions of Divine and human life have their origin in the East."

"People term themselves smart when they call faith faddism and religious enthusiasm fanaticism," said Tara. "Faith and enthusiasm still rule in the East as they have done for thousands of years. The powerful Japanese believe in them as much as our Hindu fellow-subjects. With them religious sentiment is stronger than civic laws. The Church of Jagannath is a national force we cannot afford to ignore.

"How little people at home know of it!" said Mr. Long, rising, as Mohan Lal and Mr. Sircar came forward.

"Hinduism humanizes labour. Caste makes the proudest Raja share the joys and sorrows of the poorest peasant. Hinduism brings harmony between the capitalist and the labourer, the essence of honest Socialism. It produces a vibration of peace in the heart, which is the life and essence of our creed, on which depends our nationality. The moral civilization of India and the material progress of Japan will lead the way in the future. King Asoka of India started the idea which has consecrated our race," said the pilgrim fervently, as he carefully studied the face of Sircar. It seemed familiar to him.

Mr. Long and Tara hurried away with a friendly greeting to the stranger. Mr. Sircar, who had hitherto been silent, now seated himself with Mohan Lal by the side of the pilgrim, to whom he said: "I believe we have met before."

"In the 'Kailas,' the famous cave-temple of Ellora. There we worshipped the rock-cut goddess together," was the prompt answer of the stranger.

True it was. The pilgrims came then to study the Delhi Durbar from a purely political point of view. Both Sircar and the pilgrim—then a political missionary—had by accident seats side by side in "Block G" of the Durbar amphi-

theatre. It was before the Russo-Japanese War. They became friendly. Sircar invited the stranger to visit the Ellora caves, which were full of sacred memory to both. They met there; they worshipped the rock-cut Kali on the traditional darkest night—the new moon in October. Sircar was a Kali worshipper; he addressed the goddess as Kali. His Japanese friend worshipped her as Kariteimo. Sircar's family worship had been that of Kali for centuries. As a boy he enjoyed ringing the bell at the Kali temple, and walked miles with his grandfather to select jet-black goats, Kali's favourite sacrifice.

They were four days together. They had quietly discussed the political position of Asia. The Japanese told him of the impending Russo-Japanese War and its probable result.

"Russia would annihilate Japan!" was the cry of Sircar's colleagues at the Bar Library. Sircar laughed in his sleeve; he was behind the scenes, but too shrewd to show his hand. Real reserve in everything, seeming reserve in nothing —that was his motto.

Sircar was delighted to meet his old friend.

The political events of the last five years had proved that the "pilgrim" was no ordinary man. He could unravel all the threads of the world's politics. Five years ago he predicted the defeat of the Russians and the intervention of President Roosevelt.

Sircar's Japanese friend had predicted the anti-Asiatic movement in the West, resulting in the unification of Asia. British statesmen were unwittingly helping the unification of Asia by encouraging anti-Asiatic legislation in their own colonies.

"The Divine Little Finger working for the rise of Japan as the greatest Power in the history of the world," said the Japanese pilgrim.

This was exactly what he had said in the Cave of Ellora, when, to conciliate Japanese sentiment, Sircar had offered to the goddess Kali red pomegranate juice—a poor imitation of blood, the traditional offering to Kali in Bengal.

Sircar introduced Mohan Lal to his old Japanese friend.

"Lord Tara seems a delightful person, and his bride is lovely," said the stranger to Mohan Lal. "Is she the first Indian Princess to marry an English gentleman?"

"I think so," said Mohan.

"You forget that Mr. Fitzpatrick a hundred years ago married a Princess of the Deccan," said Sircar. "General Pemberton, too, married a frontier chieftain's daughter at Peshawar. Captain Pemberton, the son of this inter-marriage, handled for years the frontier tribes without the curb being felt. He understood his mother's people."

"In this case there are certainly exceptional advantages, we hope," said Mohan. "Lord Tara

is the only son of a very ancient Irish family of rank, and it is a romantic love marriage on both sides. I hope it may do real good to India."

"Rise of Asia at any cost!" said the Japanese pilgrim as he took his leave.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE HONEYMOON

TARA had taken leave of Mr. Long, who promised to meet him on his arrival at Cuttack.

Tara met Mohan Lal coming out of the Rani Dowager's tent, and asked him for a few minutes' conversation.

"I have been asking dear Kamala what she would like best for a wedding-gift. She already has superb jewels, and she does not care to wear too many. So we want you to consult the Raja about the irrigation works for the improvement of his land, and to present him with three thousand pounds towards them as a 'mark of love and gratitude from his niece, Kamala, Viscountess Tara.' It would give employment to a great many poor people on the estates, and enable you to cultivate more valuable crops than the mahwa-flowers Mr. Toddy had his eye on. I will give you a cheque for the amount when we return to Allahabad."

"It is the very thing the Raja and I have most at heart. I think he will accept the gift with

sincere pleasure. You will find a shrine in the hearts of a grateful people at Hindupore some day, Lord Tara."

"You forget that I am one of the family. You have given me your most precious treasure. All I have is hers."

The Raja came in with Kamala. She had told him of Tara's gift to her and how they wished to spend it.

He could not refuse the offer, for the sake of the thousands of his dependents it would benefit.

The departure from Jagannath was delayed for another day by the heavy tropical rain that fell for twelve consecutive hours without intermission. On the following day the start was made.

The ladies travelled in State palanquins. The procession of fifty elephants came safely to an end, and the Raja's party decided to rest at Cuttack for a day and a night before beginning the long railway journey to Allahabad. Tara and Kamala, however, preferred to proceed the same day to Calcutta, where Mr. Harvey had promised to meet them. Kamala had with her the nurse who had lovingly tended her from a baby, and was now her favourite maid. Bhima was in attendance on Lord Tara.

Tara and Kamala went to the hospital to take leave of Celitia. She was delighted to see them, and gave Kamala her photograph in a silver frame of the delicate Cuttack work. She told them she had just come from the bedside of a

poor dying woman named Dukhia, who had been found lying insensible by the roadside by two pilgrims from Jagannath. She had taken some poisonous datura with fatal result, and it was impossible to save her life.

Mr. Long brought a lovely bouquet of roses for Kamala, and said farewell to them both at the railway-station.

For the first time, Kamala was travelling alone with her husband. It was a very happy journey to them both, and as they crossed the sacred Baitarni on a temporary bridge that had replaced the one carried away by the flood, they both recalled with heartfelt gratitude all that had befallen them there.

Kamala told Tara of her vision; she felt she could have no secret from him now.

"Then your mother gave you to me as a secret gift from heaven. May God bless her for it! How sweet of you to tell me this! I always wear your lotus-flowers next to my heart. I, too, had a dim, faint foreshadowing of you in a picture I saw years ago. It has faded away before the brighter radiance of your smile."

Mr. Harvey met them at the station at Calcutta with a comfortable motor-car for the drive to Barrackpore, where he gave them the warmest welcome. Kamala looked pale and tired, so Tara soon left her to rest during the evening, and dined alone with Harvey. He wore a plain evening suit.

"You see how right I was," said Harvey. "I felt sure you would come back a married man."

"I can hardly believe it yet," said Tara. "It seems like an Eastern fairy-tale."

"I should call it a very delightful reality. But you must feel rather bewildered too. You have been living lately in a world so unlike ours."

"Spiritual things seem so much nearer to one in the East; they form part of the daily life around one," said Tara.

"I have felt that ever since I came to India. If we could adapt ourselves better to Eastern ways of thought, we should be more appreciated than we are in India," replied Harvey.

"I am sure the Raja feels deeply hurt by the petty annoyances he has been subjected to, although he never condescends to take the slightest notice of them," said Tara.

"I know he does. Mohan Lal was the native attaché of Colonel Ironside for years, and one of our most loyal and valuable assistants, but he was continually harassed and annoyed by the arrogance and want of common civility shown him on all occasions. What he most resented was the surveillance of that low fellow Hunt over the Raja. It was a most intolerable and impolite insult to a reigning Rajput Prince."

"There were rumours at Cuttack that Hunt had mysteriously disappeared at Jagannath. Hashmat Khan reported that some accident

had happened. Anyhow, I believe the fellow can't be found."

"I wouldn't offer much of a reward for his recovery. I wonder he has not come to a bad end long ago. The vendetta spirit sometimes wakes up among the mild Hindus, and they all hated him. But for Ironside, the fellow would never have been put in a position for which he was perfectly unfit. It's astonishing the mischief one man like Ironside can do in a long term of service in the country. He offends perhaps a dozen or more of the leading Rajas, and their people, in return, naturally become more or less disaffected towards us. He lost one of the best native soldiers to the service by unjustly punishing him for not understanding a ridiculous order he gave him about a donkey, because Ironside didn't know the Hindu feminine word for an ass!"

"Who was this Ironside? He can't have been a gentleman by birth."

"He was not. His father was an army tailor who lent money to young officers at about 150 per cent. interest. Of course he didn't always get paid; young minors who borrow money at that rate don't always acknowledge their debts when they come of age. He brought an action against one of the defaulters, who owed him, according to his reckoning, about fifty thousand pounds; but he lost the case, and took it so much to heart that he retired from business.

His son then changed his name to Ironside, by Royal Letters Patent, and, through the interest of a General who owed his father money, got into the Indian Service, where he distinguished himself, as we know."

"How did all this come out?"

"Murder will out, you know, except in the dear old Emerald Isle. An army doctor who was stationed at Karimabad happened to know all about it. A young ensign in his regiment had been cashiered on account of his dealings with Ironside's father. Very disagreeable allusions to money-lending transactions were sometimes made at the club, and then Ironside became a perfect bear to everyone within his reach. I was thankful enough to get away from him at last, I can tell you. But it really is a serious thing for men like that to have authority in India."

"I met a Japanese gentleman on pilgrimage at Jagannath," said Tara, "who unfolded a most comprehensive scheme for the unity of Buddhist Asia on purely religious grounds. He foretold that the seven hundred millions of Chinese, Japanese, and Hindus would one day form a vast Asiatic Empire."

"More impossible things have happened," said Harvey. "But now we must think of Lady Tara. I hope you will let me see her to-morrow; you must not keep her all to yourself. I sent a note in her name, as you wished, to Madame

Marabou, who, I am told by a lady, is the best dressmaker in Calcutta, to come here to-morrow morning to receive my lady's orders."

"That's very good of you. I like Kamala just as she is, but I suppose she must dress like other people; only I shan't let her give up the sari. It's the most graceful thing I ever saw, as she wears it."

"How well the Rajput dress suits you!"

"I shall always wear it in India when I can; but you're an official, so I must don my national dress when I am staying with you."

"Have you told your mother of your marriage yet?"

"I wrote to my mother about Kamala from Hindupore, and said that I would telegraph from Calcutta, to ask her and my father to meet us in London if we were married. I know they will be pleased about it."

"Your wife will feel at home at Tara; there are so many beautiful Indian things there. I suppose you will stay there for the rest of the summer and autumn?"

"There's plenty of room there. We can have the West Tower all to ourselves, if we like. If the climate does not suit Kamala in the winter, we shall come back here for two or three months. At all events, I hope to spend the next winter in India. When are you going to take six months' leave, Herbert, to come and see us in Ireland?"

"Perhaps next year. My father wants to see

me; he is growing old. I have not been home for ten years."

Madame Marabou duly appeared the next morning, and, being a person of excellent taste and judgment, decreed that Lady Tara should wear very simple dresses of soft silk or Cashmere beautifully embroidered, and quite agreed with Lord Tara that the Indian sari, in some form or other, was the most becoming addition to my lady's attire. Madame also declared that the Princess had the most graceful and beautiful figure she had ever seen, and promised to send everything required for the voyage within three days.

That very afternoon a soft creamy Cashmere teagown with a crimson sari arrived, and in it Lady Tara made her appearance in the evening, with the ruby rose in her hair.

Mr. Harvey received her with a Court bow, and respectfully kissed her hand as he led her in to dinner.

The table was decorated with trails and bouquets of the lovely lotus-flowers. Harvey gave a small bouquet of them to Kamala, and fastened a buttonhole in Tara's coat and his own.

"It is my favourite flower," he said to Kamala, "the flower that is named after you."

Kamala looked at him innocently, and said: "I remember you very well at Delhi. You used to bring lovely flowers—my favourite roses and lotus."

"And Rani Kamala used to accompany me on the guitar," said Harvey. "I never sing now."

"Tara's halls will ring again with music when you come to us," said Tara. "I love music too well to be satisfied with what I can do myself. Kamala has a very sweet voice, full of pathos and feeling. So have you, Herbert."

After dinner they had music. Kamala sang two or three Hindustani songs to Harvey's accompaniment. Then Harvey tried to sing Schubert's "Adieu," but his voice broke down, and he had to pretend he had taken a chill.

He did not attempt another love-song while Tara was with him.

The week at Barrackpore was like one long, happy day.

On the last evening Harvey asked Tara to allow him to offer a wedding-gift to Kamala—it was a pretty bracelet, a wreath of emerald shamrocks.

"The emblem of your new country, Lady Tara, and of mine," said Harvey.

At his request Tara gave him a copy of the wedding photograph of himself and Kamala in a frame of emerald shamrocks and roses.

A telegram came from Lady Claremont the morning they left Calcutta:

"We shall meet our beloved children in London."

CHAPTER XXXV

TRANSMIGRATION

THE Raja sent his saloon carriage to Calcutta for the return journey of Tara and Kamala to Allahabad.

There they were met by Mohan Lal and Sircar with a carriage and four and two other carriages for the drive to Hindupore.

Although there had been a heavy storm during the night, and the ground was still wet, there was a very large assemblage of the people along the whole route.

The marriage was very popular, for Tara had won the hearts of the Hindu neighbours during his stay among them, and they wished to make him feel at home in the country of his wife, the niece of their beloved Raja.

The English bungalow had been prepared for their stay ; Kamala must now take her place as an English lady.

The next day was to be the wedding reception.

Mohan Lal had consulted Tara before leaving Cuttack as to inviting any officials on the occasion.

"Certainly not," replied Tara. "I have not been officially received yet in India myself. I came out as a private gentleman, and I should not think of introducing my wife to Society in India until she has been presented at home. My mother will take her to the first Court there is in London, which will not be until February or March, so perhaps Kamala may first be presented to the Viceroy of Ireland. At all events, she is sure of a hearty welcome at home. We shall all be Hindus in our welcome of thee, Kamala. I know how much she is giving up for me."

The reception was very successful. The Raja had invited all his neighbours within easy distance, and had engaged the two best military bands stationed at Allahabad.

The Rani received, with Kamala, a very large party of Hindu ladies, who looked forward especially to the pleasure of hearing the venerable poet Khusru recite a Persian romance for the occasion.

A large, beautifully carved lattice-work screen was placed in front of the ladies' tent on one of the broad marble terraces, where they could see everything that was going on without being themselves too much *en évidence.*

Kamala looked very lovely in a pale pink embroidered robe and sari, but there was a shade of sadness on her sweet face at the thought of leaving her dear old home. At the sight of Tara, however, she grew radiant again: he was

everything to her now. With him she was always happy. Khusru Khan came up to him and congratulated him warmly on having discovered that he had a heart. "You have stolen our most exquisite treasure, our sweetest rose; we shall long to see her again."

The Raja came to ask if Khusru Khan would be kind enough to recite the old Persian romance of Prince Farukh Fal.

PRINCE FARUKH FAL.

In the kingdom of Serindib there reigned a Sovereign—in splendour like Alexander—whose goblet was filled with the luscious wine of success, and who rested luxuriously upon a couch of perfumed rose-leaves that bathed his senses in delicious repose.

The only shadow upon the brightness of his home was that he had no son in whom he might renew his life and revive the glories of his ancestors.

He was constantly dwelling upon his desire for this greatest of blessings, and spent many days and nights in earnest prayer that it might be vouchsafed to him.

The Divine favour that ever awaits the sincere petitioner at length deigned to grant his request. The arrow of prayer reached the mark of acceptance.

A holy recluse entirely devoted to heavenly meditation, and taking no part in worldly affairs,

suddenly came forth from his retirement to relieve the King's anxiety. He presented to him an apple of much beauty and flavour, and said: "This fruit shall bring to you the fulfilment of your desire. Give it to the Queen to eat this very night."

The King obeyed the command, and at the appointed time the Sun of Royalty rose to gladden the realm of Serindib. The first care of the King was to consult those learned in the secrets of the stars as to the destiny of his young son.

Having cast his nativity and made their observations, the Magi reported to the attendants on the throne that there was every prospect of good fortune. The Prince would, however, be in danger of falling in love on beholding the portrait of a beautiful girl.

Warned by this prediction, the King appointed faithful attendants at Court to guard the Prince carefully from seeing any pictures; but the wisest precautions can avail nothing against the fixed decrees of Fate!

The Prince happened one day to see a lady in attendance at Court hastily close a large portfolio of drawings as he entered the room.

He insisted upon being allowed to look at them, and when the lady at length yielded to his entreaties the fatal mischief was done! The Prince beheld the portrait of the lovely and fascinating Princess who was to attract him to her-

self at the peril of his life, as had been foretold. The Prince fell into a fainting-fit, and upon recovering from it his mind became distracted by the desire to seek the beloved original of the portrait he had seen, which had become indelibly impressed upon his imagination and heart.

The King at length, finding that it was vain to oppose the Divine decree, allowed his son to follow his inclination and depart in search of the unknown bride.

The passion-torn Prince, left to his own devices, determined to wander abroad until he discovered the retreat of the fair beauty who had disturbed the peace of his heart.

He was accompanied on his romantic quest by Jafar, the son of his father's Vizier, who had been brought up with Prince Farukh Fal from infancy, and now resolved to share in the perilous adventures of the flight. After some weeks of fatiguing travel they reached a populous city, where they sought in vain for any clue to the Princess they longed to discover. Weary and disappointed, the Prince, having quitted the city in despair, took up his abode in a mosque not far from the city gates, which had many spacious buildings for pilgrims and devotees. Here he resolved to dedicate himself for a time to prayer and penance, in the hope of obtaining favour from heaven.

Some days afterwards Jafar again visited the city in search of the original of the portrait that

had disturbed the peace of the Prince's heart, but without success. So Farukh Fal, with his faithful Jafar, proceeded on his way in the path of uncertainty till they came to the city of Ujain, where Jafar resorted, after much deliberation, to the following plan:

Having fitted up a shop in one of the streets of Ujain, where travellers meet from all parts of the world, he filled it with rare treasures from every land, and placed in a prominent position the picture that had disturbed the Prince's happiness, hoping it might attract the notice of some stranger who could give him news of the original.

Some days passed before this object was attained, but at last a traveller who had seen many lands recognized the picture, and said:

"This is a portrait of the beautiful Queen of Sangaldip—a country inhabited only by women—who professes utter hatred to all mankind.

"Her beauty and charm are indescribable, and are only equalled by her courage and wit.

"A waterless desert of two hundred miles of burning sand surrounds her dominions, and renders them almost inaccessible; but should any luckless man succeed in entering them, he is instantly put to death."

Jafar, with much joy, hastened to the Prince to announce that the queen of his heart was now almost within his reach, and Farukh Fal, now impatient of a moment's delay, longed for wings, to soar like a bird towards the country of his

beloved. Jafar, however, prudently induced the enamoured Prince to delay the journey until they had provided themselves with rich suits of female attire and various kinds of musical instruments, hoping, under the disguise of singing girls, to gain peaceful admission to the presence of the Amazon Queen.

After many days of toilsome march they at length reached the wilderness named by the traveller, through which they proceeded with great difficulty.

When the sun was at its zenith they spread the carpet of repose at the foot of a tree to rest beneath its shade. In this tree a Simurgh—the great eagle of Persian fame—had built her nest. In her absence a monstrous black snake was on his way to destroy the brood; but the Prince, drawing his sabre, cut him in pieces, and laid the fragments in a heap on the ground, after which, overcome by fatigue, he and Jafar lay down to rest.

Towards sunset the Simurgh, who had flown in search of food for her young, returned laden with delicate fruits from all parts of the earth.

When she saw the sleepers, supposing them to be enemies of her children, she was about to kill them, when the eaglets informed her of their rescue from the snake through the humanity of the Prince. Upon this the Simurgh advanced softly to Farukh Fal, and, gently awaking him, thanked him greatly for his kindness, presenting him with an offering of delicious fruit.

Then she said: "In return for the kindness shown to my children, I now adopt thee as my son, and will do all in my power to further thy views. Tell me, then, what thou hast most at heart, and I will aid thee to attain thy utmost wish."

The Prince, at this unexpected kindness, which he felt sure came to him from above, told the mighty Simurgh all that had befallen him.

She replied: "My dear son, although moved by all-powerful love, thou hast undertaken a dangerous task; yet thou shalt succeed in it, by the blessing of Heaven. Rest patiently till to-morrow."

At daybreak the Simurgh, having made the Prince and Jafar seat themselves on her back, soared with them through the regions of space towards Sangaldip, and about sunset descended with them near the capital where the beautiful Queen lived.

She then presented Farukh Fal with a feather from her wing, desiring him, in any peril or danger he might be in, to cast a small portion of it into a fire, when she would fly to his aid on the wings of the wind to relieve his distress.

She soared away before the Prince had time to express his thanks.

The Prince and Jafar, now disguised as women, and carrying instruments of music, entered the city, and, with their youthful looks and long hair, no suspicion of their being men could arise.

Fearlessly proceeding through the street, they met in a square a company of damsels beautiful as peris, who were freely disporting themselves as in the gardens of Paradise.

The two strangers joined the crowd, and after the manner of strolling players, having sung a strain of salutation, asked pardon for their intrusion.

The company, noting that in dress and manner the strangers were unlike them, asked to be told who they were.

Farukh Fal replied: "I am named Dilpazira [heart-delighter], and this is my sister Naeeda [Venus]. We have heard of the kindness and hospitality of your Sovereign to strangers, and made a sacred vow of pilgrimage to her throne. We have but just now reached this heavenly city, under the auspices of our lucky star. With your permission, we will offer some proof of our skill in song for your acceptance."

The company, pleased with their courteous manners, received the offer graciously, and respectfully asked the strangers to be seated.

The two friends, both skilled musicians, having tuned their tambours, sang a love-song which enchanted the company. Then they played the duff and the chung and other Persian instruments with exquisite skill, charming the whole audience, who loudly applauded, and showered pieces of gold and silver at the feet of the performers as thick as rose-leaves falling in spring.

Dilpazira and Naeeda, delighted with the success of their scheme, sought lodging for the night when the company had dispersed. Early the next morning Sunnobir, the Lady Vizier to the Queen, and a beautiful and accomplished woman, sent for the foreign musicians. They joyfully obeyed the summons to her palace, and their performance so much delighted the Vizier that she invited them to play and sing before the Queen, and, having given them rich dresses and valuable jewels, introduced them to her Court.

Farukh Fal, on seeing the dazzling beauty of the Princess whose portrait had ensnared his heart, could scarcely control himself, but by a strong effort of will sang with a passion and sweetness that enraptured the Queen, who bestowed generous gifts upon him and Jafar, and commanded them to perform before her twice a week.

After they had been some time in Sangaldip, the Prince ventured to ask Sunnobir the cause of the Queen's dislike to men.

The Vizier graciously replied that the Queen's own explanation was as follows:

"The first form that was given to me was that of a silver pheasant, and, following the custom of this curious world in production, in which the connecting chain of existence depends upon offspring, I necessarily accepted the society of a helpmate. In process of time I built my nest, laid my eggs, and hatched them. On one very

dark night a fire broke out in our grove, and surrounded my nest like the setting of a ring, and, being asleep, I discovered it too late to be of any avail. As my young ones were not able to fly, and I could not convey them both away at once, I entreated the help of their father, but he was cowardly enough to desert me, and left us to our fate.

"Motherly love prevailed, and my mortal part was consumed with that of my children; but, the good I had done meeting the acceptance of the Most High, I lived again in the beautiful form of the Queen you see before you. Remembering the cruel inconstancy and desertion of my partner, I have vowed to hold no intercourse with contemptible man while constrained to dwell in the form of woman."

The Prince related this wonderful transmigration to Jafar, and soon afterwards requested to be allowed to leave and return home.

The Queen and Sunnobir at length consented, with much reluctance, to their departure, and conferred upon them many rich jewels and an immense sum of money in return for the pleasure their musical talent had afforded.

Having left the city, they threw off their womanly attire and burnt it, with their musical instruments.

The Prince then cast into a fire a bit of the feather of the Simurgh, who, instantly appearing, as she had promised, at their desire bore them to

the borders of Sangaldip. By Jafar's advice, the Prince had collected a band of chosen men, well armed, and was with them conveyed once more by the Simurgh into the Queen's favourite garden by night.

The following morning, when the Queen's ladies came as usual to gather flowers, they were all suddenly surrounded and made prisoners, except one, who was purposely allowed to escape, that she might convey to her mistress the news of the disaster.

The Queen sent to inquire the cause of this invasion, and was informed that the heir of the kingdom of Serindib had vowed eternal hatred to women, while his army, composed of Simurghs, killed every woman they met. Having heard that Sangaldip was governed by women, he had marched to put them to the sword. On receiving this message the Queen sent again to say that she had good reason for her hatred towards man. Unless the Prince of Serindib had equally good cause for his ill-feeling, to make war upon the innocent and unoffending was unworthy of a just Prince.

To this he replied that he had a heart-afflicting cause for his feeling, and then related a similar tale to that she had told her Vizier, and that he too had been deserted by a wife!

The Queen, astonished at this coincidence in their fortunes, granted the Prince an interview.

Farukh Fal proposed that they should both

forget the past and trust each other for the future.

As the Queen admired the young Prince very much, she accepted his offer, and agreed to trust him with her happiness as a woman.

The friendly Simurgh took her adopted son and his Queen under her special protection, and the Prince chose for his emblem in war and peace the device of the soaring eagle, which his descendants still bear.

The fair Sunnobir was induced to accept Jafar as her husband. He was appointed Vizier of the United Kingdoms of Serindib and Sangaldip.

* * * * *

The next day Lord and Lady Tara left Bombay on their way to England.

THE END

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